

EPISODES OF EARLY DAYS

—
WILL E. STOKE



6E

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1833 01822 7568

#35 - 151
HERD #2174

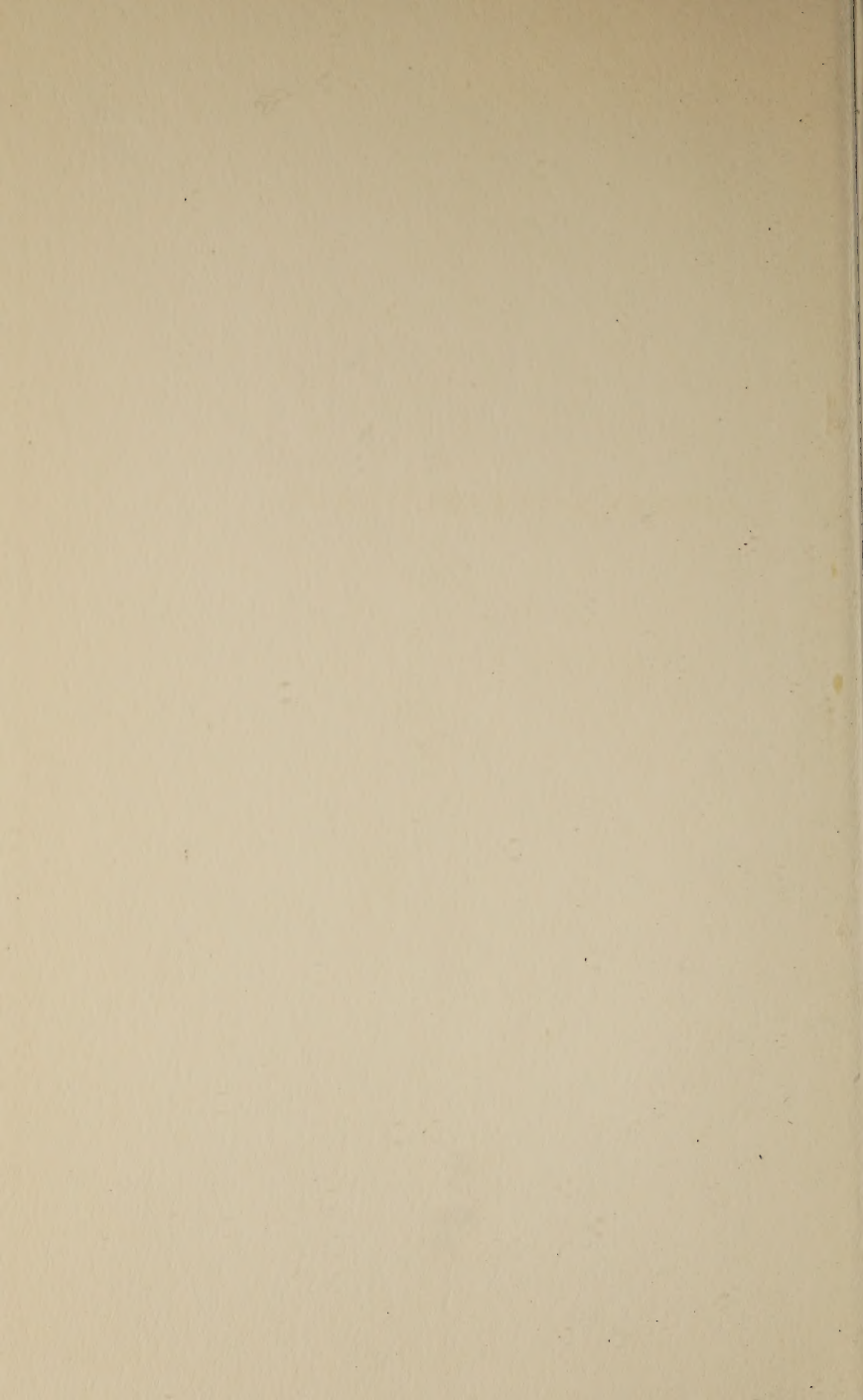
Only Vol. Pub.

GENEALOGY

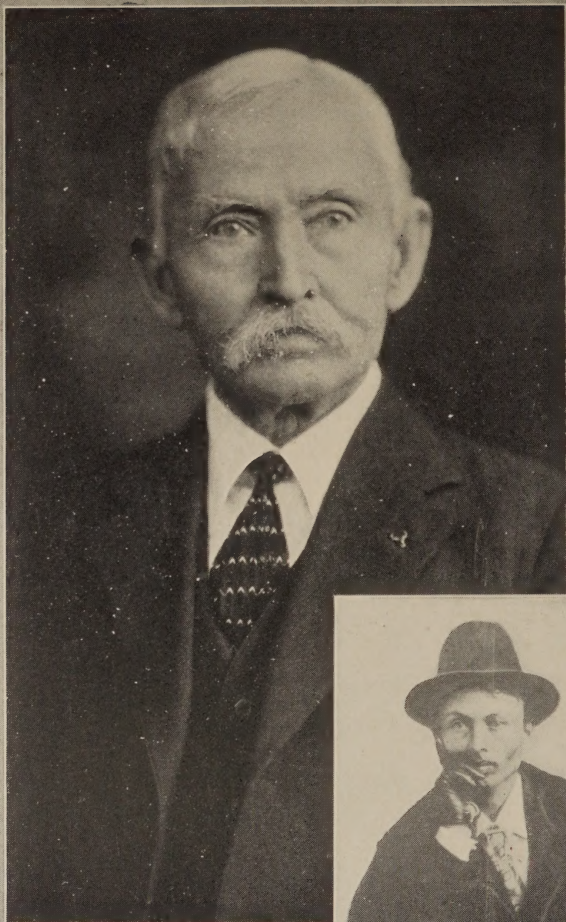
978.1

ST67EP,

V.1

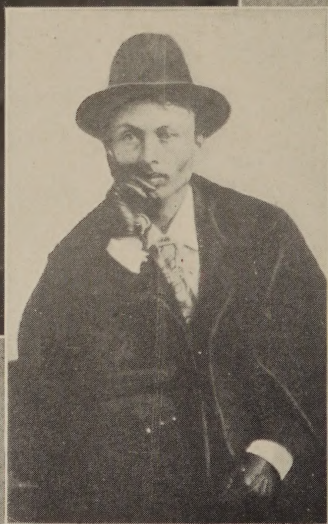


EPISODES OF EARLY DAYS



Above—The Author after 50 years of life among the people herein told about.

Below—The Author when learning the printer's trade in 1876.



EPISODES OF EARLY DAYS

*In Central and
Western Kansas*

By
WILL E. STOKE

Illustrated by
CHARLES ALLEN



VOL. I

PUBLISHED BY
WILL E. STOKE
GREAT BEND, KANSAS

COYPRIGHT 1926
By WILL E. STOKES

PRINTED BY
THE MCCORMICK-ARMSTRONG PRESS
WICHITA, KANSAS

Table of Contents

	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY - - - - -	7
VISION AND FRUITION - - - - -	9
SNIPE HUNTING - - - - -	16
A HORSE TRADE CALLED OFF - - - - -	20
STAMPEDING BUFFALO - - - - -	24
MISTAKE OF A GALLANT - - - - -	29
BY "SPECIAL" DELIVERY - - - - -	33
MOTHER BICKERDYKE - - - - -	36
A BIG BLUFFER BESTED - - - - -	41
AN UNUSUAL FOOT RACE - - - - -	45
EVOLUTION OF THE SLICKER - - - - -	50
BUFFALO AND MOUSE - - - - -	53
THE GOOD SAMARITAN - - - - -	57
SOME POLITICAL STUNTS - - - - -	62
OUR MENNONITE PIONEERS - - - - -	67
"SHOOTING UP" A TOWN - - - - -	70
TOM'S SPOTTED PONY - - - - -	73
SOME UNWELCOME GUESTS - - - - -	79
THREE LEGS AND THREE ARMS - - - - -	83
WHAT TO DO NEXT - - - - -	87
FRIENDSHIP RENEWED - - - - -	91
BILL WAS A SPORTSMAN - - - - -	95
TWO FOXY GRANDMAS - - - - -	100
TOM STONE'S NUT CRACKER - - - - -	104
KANSAS SETS THE PACE - - - - -	108
AN OLD MYSTERY SOLVED - - - - -	113
A BADGER FIGHT - - - - -	116
FIRST AIRSHIP SIGHTED - - - - -	119

HE WAS QUICK ON THE TRIGGER - - - -	122
A MAN FOR BREAKFAST - - - -	124
A SKIRMISH WITH "INDIANS" - - - -	126
EXTERMINATING BEDBUGS - - - -	128
HUNTING WILD GEESE - - - -	130
FORT ZARAH - - - -	136
COULD SHIMMIE BUT COULD NOT SKATE - -	139
A GOOD STORY TELLER - - - -	142
A WILD BEAST AT LARGE - - - -	146
GHOSTS IN THE COURT HOUSE - - - -	151
TWO IMPROMPTU DUCKINGS - - - -	156
TWO MISDIRECTED "MASHES" - - - -	160
HIGH FINANCE IN 1871 - - - -	164
ALLEN'S CORNER - - - -	167
THE FIRE FIGHTERS - - - -	170
THE HOWL OF THE COYOTE - - - -	174
SCALPED, BUT STILL LIVES - - - -	176
TWO COURT INCIDENTS - - - -	180
A VETERAN'S STORY - - - -	185
STATIC OF LONG AGO - - - -	190
A FEW SECRETS DIVULGED - - - -	195

Introductory

HAVING lived over fifty years in the locality in which occurred the incidents herein recorded, and having been personally connected with many of them, the author of this book feels justified in assuming the reader will find not only incidents to entertain and historical data to interest, but will gain a deeper insight into the controlling elements of adventure and exploit which sustained and encouraged the hardy pioneers of, not only, Western Kansas but of all frontiers which have been turned from wilderness wastes into productive lands for useful husbandry.

Personal allusions are necessary, dates and locations are important. No labored descriptions are attempted in order to bring to mind these early day pictures. I give them as I saw them, or as they were told to me by living men and women.

The painted picture reproducing charms of feature, or enticing view, is the one commanding value and renown. The song which quickens pulsing heart and quiets nervous strain we like the best. The friends who gathered nearest us in trouble or in pain won the test of our true fealty and wear the brightest crown. The story told in simplest truth mayhap will interest old age, and give instruction to the growing youth, or imaginary grief assuage. So, with that end in view, I offer you these briefly told stories of the West; these episodes concerning life; the incidents I've briefly jotted down.

Vision and Fruition

KIND reader, will you now please relax! Loosen all the cords of mental telepathy, forget about the busy present, and let me lead you upon a journey into the ever interesting past.

All set? Well, here we go:

It is a late spring day in the early 70's. You are young and full of vigor. You are mounted on a tough little mustang pony which you have ridden for days and days as you accompanied a long string of white topped freight wagons which has wound its tortuous way from the banks of the Big Muddy across the Great American Desert, bound for the Rocky Mountains over that now well blazed course, the Santa Fe Trail. You are now where the map shows that river, the Arkansas, reaching its farthest point north, as the waters, made up of the melting snows of the Rockies, seek their final outlet in the Father of Waters—the Mississippi.

You are “on your own,” and have decided to come this far and “view the landscape o'er” with the intention of selecting a piece of land and becoming a homesteader. You have bidden your companions of the trail goodbye, and received their hearty “So long, friend,” and are now ready to begin getting your eyes full.

You sit astride your mount at the apex of a gentle slope up from the level river bottom land, and looking west and north you see a straggling strip of stunted timber growth zigzagging back and forth and growing

smaller and less distinct as it loses itself in the misty distance. That is the Walnut creek, and you decide to ride up its valley and size up its possibilities.

Along near the bed of the stream you see here and there broad and level stretches of bottom land, covered with tall blue-stem grass of a pleasing brown tint, through which already sprigs of green are pushing up to greet the genial sun.

From this bottom land the ground slopes gently up, with here and there a rough break where the rains of centuries have washed off the top soil and exposed cliffs and benches of limestone rock, with crevices here and there where the scavengers of the plains, the coyotes, have their dens. Above and beyond, rolling away in moderate undulations, you see the so-called "desert" lands.

As you ride farther and higher out onto these rolling plains the strength of your vision is tested to capacity. On and on before you unfolds a vast and apparently unlimited expanse of beauty and delight. Matted with a thick carpet of buffalo grass that reflects from its glossy compactness the sun's warm rays, roll away and away those grazing grounds of the bison, the antelope and the deer, and your heart swells warm with the thought that nothing is so grand as all outdoors.

You wonder at the warm waves of heat that arise to caress your cheeks, as the sun's rays glance from the carpeted ground. Becoming warm you doff your coat and strap it with your blanket roll behind your saddle

and then ride on. You have left the valley of the Walnut, and begin to wonder how far you must yet go before you may find a cooling drink.

As you canter along, taking in long and invigorating breaths of the purest air that ever filled your lungs, you feel like shouting aloud with the very joy of living. But you are becoming more thirsty. You glance about to the right and to the left in search of some indication of a watercourse.

Ah, there it is! Away off yonder is a fringe of trees. Where there are trees you will surely find water. You spur ahead. Your pony seems to lag, to be short of wind, but you assure him "we are coming to water, old boy." The trees appear larger and nearer; and beyond them? "Jimminy, boy, there's a lake—see that water?" Then you urge the beast on—when all at once the trees, the water, the promise of cool rest are gone. What has happened? Had you fallen asleep and dreamed of cooling shade and lapping water? No, you had been awake—your eyes had seen them. Then memory comes to aid an addled brain, and you recall having read, in descriptions of this wonder-land, about the mirage—that optical atmospheric illusion to be seen on the western prairies.

Stopping and dismounting to meditate upon the situation and give your horse a rest, you ask yourself: Is all this beautiful stretch of land, so apparently productive, so easy of cultivation and so grand in its immense proportions but a dream—an empty vision? You can not believe it so. Your faith that God made

nothing in vain comes to console and encourage you, and again mounting your faithful horse, you once more move on; changing your course to the north and down from the upland elevation, and following the depression of a grass covered draw you again ride on, still strong in the faith that this is not only the land of promise, but of fulfillment.

As the glorious sun sinks in magnificent grandeur below the western hills you again discover in the distance dark fringes of foliage. And as you draw nearer that same fringe of verdure zigzagging on to the west, you are again approaching the valley of the Walnut, where cooling waters are certain, and where you find not only physical comfort but human welcome and good cheer. For someone has been ahead of you in searching out a beauty spot.

You enter no great mansion, encounter no large retinue of servants, but the sod home is clean and comfortable, the viands served you are healthful, and the welcome extended you is that of one who has a full realization of what are your hopes and ambitions.

Kind reader, by going with me into the past you were an example of one of the many Kansas pioneers.

The warm blood of ambitious youth coursed through your veins as you visualized the possibilities of this wonder-land—the productiveness of the virgin soil; the invigorating healthfulness of the clear atmosphere; the pleasurable satisfaction derived from quenching your thirst at the cooling waters—all these apparent and

actual possibilities caused you to become not only an explorer, but a dreamer.

You had the vision. You took the chance. You met the situation as God intended that man should meet it, and adapted yourself to the life He intended you to live. And it was not in vain.

Come with me again and I will show you—

We will stand upon the spot I had in mind when I started you out fifty years ago. Look to the west. First, on the right and on the left you will see blocks of handsome business buildings; then on the left a magnificent new church building just completed at a cost of over \$150,000; on the right a handsome library building, two large brick school buildings, and on the north side filling the block two more fine church buildings. Continue looking west up a smooth paved street and you will see block after block of modern residences, the street lined on both sides by handsome shade trees, whose branches almost touch over the center of the street—properly named Forest Avenue. And in the far distant west the same glorious sun sinking to rest in a halo of grandeur.

Look north from the same spot—a paved street, more business blocks, then residences and shade trees nearly as far as the eye can see. Look south and you will see the same magnificent panorama of progress. Look east, and before you stands one of the finest court house structures in the west, built at a cost of nearly half a million dollars.

Now climb into a plane with me and we will take a

trip over the same route you took in your pioneering up the valley of the Walnut and then west. The time again is late spring. The creek, verdure bordered, with the sparkling water shining through, is still there, winding its zigzag course. The gently rolling hills billow below us, on and on in endless panorama. But there are no bleak stretches of unbroken sod; no reflected sunlight from the dead grass as of yore; no howl of hungry coyote or rumble of buffalo herds. Instead there are miles and miles of emerald green of the new wheat fields as the young and eager blades reach up to greet the sun. But it is not now an unbroken stretch of sameness. We are passing over hundreds, yes thousands, of comfortable farm homes around which are grouped great barns, granaries, silos, wind mills and groves of shade trees. No lack of water—you can get it anywhere. Only a few minutes of flight, and we have passed over another town; and there are others to be seen to the south, and to the north. And if we continue our flight on west to the foothills of the Rockies, this ever changing but apparently never ending panorama—productive fields, modern homes, great herds of domestic cattle and sheep—passes beneath us.

No more trackless desert, but laced from east to west, from north to south with a system of paved and graded highways over which we see automobiles—apparently crawling, but in fact speeding at the rate of twenty to fifty miles an hour—countless black dots like monster beetles darting hither and yon and carrying the happy families of descendants of those hardy men and women

who had the vision, who obeyed the promptings of desire to develop the bounteous gifts of Nature which had so long lain dormant and untamed.

In that early day you rode with some misgivings over the surface of the land. Today we soared as if on the wings of the swallow through the untracked air above. But that is not all the story.

In the unknown depths beneath the surface of the earth there is being discovered by a new generation of pioneers, sources of untold wealth, which, when mastered by human science and skill, will bring comfort and material wealth to mankind, in the embryo oil fields of western Kansas.

Kind reader, I hope you have enjoyed these two rides. They were not wholly excursions of the imagination.



Snipe Hunting

There was plenty of wild game in this "Great American Desert" in the days of the early pioneers, and no pesky game laws to contend with, either. There were plover, wild duck, wild geese, prairie chickens and snipe. Snipe hunting was supposed to be the most exciting, and the easiest way for the inexperienced hunter to get some good luscious eating. We old-timers, or natives, however, reserved the pleasures of snipe hunting for our friends just from the East, or, as we called them (among ourselves) the tenderfeet.

While there were certain preferred seasons for hunting most all the other kinds of game, snipe could be

hunted successfully any time of the year. So, when a likely appearing young man from Boston, or New York, or Kalamazoo, or Susquehanna, or some other place "back East" appeared, the boys would gather at Allen's corner and talk enthusiastically about their great luck the night before in bagging dozens of plump, fat snipe; talk about what delicious eating they were, and express regret that the stranger had not been here the night before to participate in the sport and the eats. If he showed indications of a hanker, they strung him along with more palaver, until Bill Zutavern, or George Poole, or possibly George Moses or Henry Moss came along and joined the group. When they heard what the talk was about, one of them would break out enthusiastically about how Fred Witte, or Oss Wood or some other dweller out on the Walnut had just come to town and reported a big flock of snipe piping down near their place—and immediately plans were made to go out that night and bag some. And of course the tenderfoot was cordially invited to go along.

So about eight or nine P. M. the hunters would gather at a given starting point and depart in a bunch for the hunting grounds. Some of the creek dwellers would post themselves around in different locations and give occasional snipe calls as the bunch of hunters approached. The methods of "circlings" and "driving" and "guarding the bag" were discussed as they went to the place where the snipe "used," and, as the new man was not onto the methods of circling, driving, or calling, it would be unanimously agreed that he be given the best and easiest

job, that of guarding the bag. If the night was rather cool, he was told to discard his hat and coat; and if it was a warm night, he was provided with an extra overcoat and mittens, and told to keep on his hat, or preferably a heavy cap, with ear-flaps, the reason being that snipe were very sensitive to scent and the heavy clothing would keep in the "man scent." If it was a cool night the "man scent" could be dispelled by the discarding of as much as possible of his clothing.

A large sack, with mouth propped open, was set in what the manager declared was a good "snipe run" and the guard was secreted beside it, being instructed how to suddenly close it when the first flock had been driven in. The snipe would come in a long string, one behind the other, generally from one to two dozen in a string. Like sheep, they would all follow the leader.

Being all set, the drivers and circlers would fade away in the darkness, uttering occasional snipe calls from different points of the compass. But principally they would all be making tracks for town as fast as possible to assemble at Allen's drug store, Zutavern's stable, or Old Rome, to enjoy themselves with story and song and speculation on how long their Eastern friend would wait for those snipe to come into the fold.

If the "victim" was a true sport—and I am glad to say they generally proved to be such—he was given a cordial "welcome to our city," and was unanimously voted as good material out of which to make a prominent citizen of the coming metropolis. If he was a grouch, or

a know-it-all, he soon decided for himself that the climate here was not congenial, and he moved on.

Crude sport, do you say? Yes, maybe. But it was harmless, and if any of my readers have at any time "guarded the sack" or held the bag in a snipe hunt he is fortunate indeed if he has not, at some time, been left to "hold the bag," in some more serious situations.

A Horse Trade Called Off

The recent death of Theo. Dahm calls up in our memory an incident that happened in the later seventies when Theo. and his brother, Fred, were conducting a bakery at the southeast corner of the public square. The incident not only relates to the methods adopted by some men of those days who would rather make their living by sharp practice than by honest toil or legitimate business methods; but it also brings out the stern sense of justice and the good quality of being able to grasp a situation and act quickly, that was possessed by Mr. Dahm.

The Dahm bakery was a place to which many of the settlers drove up and parked their wagons when they came to town to do their trading, as there were no other buildings close to it, and there was ample "parking" room for teams and wagons on the prairie all around it.

One Saturday a settler and his wife drove in from about six miles west of Great Bend and left their team near the bakery. The wife went over to the west side of the square to do some trading, while the husband stopped to chat awhile with the Dahm boys.

Presently a man rode up on quite a good-looking horse and spoke pleasantly to them. He passed the time of day, hazarded a guess at the character of the coming weather, and asked the farmer how he was coming on with his improvements and farm work generally. Then he looked at the farmer's team of horses, one a large,

bright, bay gelding and the other one a four-year-old brown mare. The latter looked a little fagged from heavy farm work, but was apparently sound as a dollar. Then he addressed the farmer:

"Say, how'd you like to swap that mare for my horse? He'd make a dandy match for your big bay there, an' you'd have a fine matched team."

The farmer was interested. He sized up the trader's animal—looked into its mouth, examined its eyes and rubbed its legs and shoulders for possible blemishes. It looked good to him—just such a match for his bay horse as he had been looking for. The horse trader gave the little mare a more thorough examination, thought her "rather peekid in flesh and not so heavy muscled, but likely good enough for a riding nag."

After a "gabfest" on the part of the two men, the farmer finally said:

"Well, there is nothing the matter with that mare only she ain't as good a match for my big bay as yours, but I'll trade you, even up."

"Even up, nothin' " said the trader. "You-all don't know a good hoss when you see it. I'll swap you for jist \$40 boot."

They talked back and forth some more, each man setting forth the good points of his animal. The settler offered \$10 to boot. The other came down to \$35, then to \$30. Finally he agreed to take \$25 cash boot, and this offer the settler took, counted out the \$25 and taking

the harness off the mare began adjusting it to fit the new mate for his big bay.

About this time the settler's wife returned from her shopping. She saw the team and asked Mr. Dahm if her man had been trading. Theo. told her they had traded, but with a shake of his head remarked:

"These slicker horse traders have an easy life, don't they?"

The woman scowled but said nothing. She gave her man's new horse the "once over." He was hitched to the wagon by this time and the farmer climbing into the wagon said he would drive around the square and see how his finely matched team handled themselves together. When he flapped the lines on them and sang out a pleased "Gad-ap" the new horse stiffened his front legs and refused to budge—balked. The farmer looked around for the horse trader, but that wise one had gotten out of sight behind the bakery, where he was preparing to saddle and mount the little bay mare.

But a new character had come into the show. The wife, while looking at the man and the team, had also kept an eye on the trader. When she saw him make a getaway, she pulled a big revolver from under the panier of her calico dress and made a bee line for the trader, coming up to him just as he was preparing to mount. Covering him with the gun, she called out:

"Hold on a minute, young feller. That mare is mine—Jim didn't have no right to trade her. He ain't got no

sense a-tall. Lead that mare over here, an' hand me that \$25—an' do it quick, too."

While this was going on—and the farmer's team was not—Mr. Dahm noticed the approach of another man, whom he recognized as a sort of a "side partner" of the horse trader. This newcomer had apparently taken in the situation and was ready to take a hand in the play. Theo. saw him stealthily slipping up behind the woman, with the quite evident intention of grabbing and disarming her.

Then Theo. got into the play himself. Quickly drawing his own gun and covering the "side kick" he cried:

"Hold on there, lad. Let 'em alone. Leave 'em fight it out—and my money goes on the calico to win."

And she did. The trader knew the steady hand that held the gun on him, and the unfaltering eyes that looked squarely into his, meant business, and quick business. He turned the mare over to her, also the \$25 boot money, and, as quickly as he could, left the scene accompanied by his side kick.

An afterthought: Four of the actors in this little early day sketch—Mr. Dahm, the settler, the horse trader and his man—were in one way equals; they all had the right to vote. In this same connection the plucky little pioneer woman, the balky horse, and the little brown mare were also equals; none of them had the right to vote. We men of those days said so. It is different now.

Stampeding Buffalo

The buffalo hunters in the early days in this part of Kansas—and there are but few of them left to recount their exploits—must certainly have enjoyed to the fullest extent the excitement of the chase. Few of the old boys who are still with us have as vivid a memory of experiences and observations when in youth they sought those shaggy monarchs of the plains as did Mr. Don Dodge. I shall try to describe, as he related to me, one—and, he thinks, about the last one—of his adventures after buffalo with the end in view of securing a load of hides, and incidentally a few choice hunks of the coveted beef.

In company with his father and older brother, Wall, he came into town one afternoon to lay in a supply of grub and ammunition for a day or two of hunting. They found, however, that owing to numerous demands of buffalo hunters there was that day a shortage of good rifle powder. They could only secure some coarse grained heavy blasting powder, not the best for use in their buffalo rifles. It did not have the quick action of the finer grained powder, and made much more of a flash and smoke when exploding. But it was the best they could do that day, and they did not want to put off their trip, because the herds were being decimated and driven farther north and west by the numerous hunters then in the field. So they loaded up with the blasting powder and prepared to get an early start the next morning.

They forded the Arkansas south of Great Bend. There was but little water in the river, and the "fording" stunt was mostly of the imagination. Drifting across the sand dunes that glistened bleak and bare in the morning sun, they wended their way to the higher grounds to the south, keeping watchful look-out for signs of the anticipated game.

A recent shower had cleared the atmosphere and brought a pleasant breeze, while the air was most invigorating, and all nature seemed to smile in welcome. A lurking coyote sneaked away through the tall grass of the lowlands; an occasional kildeer winged his flight overhead with his piercing whistle of defiance; a pair of antelope was observed grazing in the distance, not within gunshot range. As the men approached the antelope came to attention, watched the human intruders for a time, then turned and scampered away. Jack snipe and plover fluttered out of their path, and an occasional jack rabbit showed them his tail. But yet there was no sign of buffalo.

They drove on south probably some forty miles, having yet not come across the game of their desires, the buffalo. As it came towards dusk they were down in the vicinity of the Rattlesnake creek, and they decided to make camp for the night. The team was unhitched, unharnessed, and then picketed out, and preparations for the evening meal were under way.

It was then quite dark. While speculating upon how much farther they would have to go before sighting

game, they noticed a sort of trembling of the earth; then heard a rumbling as of distant thunder, which became momentarily more distinct, and they recognized the approach of a stampeding herd of buffalo.

Hastily bringing in the horses which had already sensed the coming danger and were snorting and pulling at their ropes, they secured the animals to the wagon. By then they could hear the "woof, woof" of the approaching beasts as the latter came charging across the prairie from the southeast. The men had not started their camp fire and they realized that they were in great danger of being trampled to death by the crazed wild brutes on the stampede.

Getting behind the wagons, the men began to fire into the middle of the approaching line of huge dark forms hurtling down upon them. Mr. Dodge says he was then glad of the blasting powder, as every shot made a loud report and a great flash of light and the approaching beasts swerved to the right and to the left and went thundering on by either side of them. The thunder of myriads of trampling hoofs, the click and clatter of clashing horns, and the bellows of crazed and demoralized animals was, he says, a sound that will ever echo in his ears.

And this monstrous pandemonium kept up almost the night through; and they had to keep constantly on the firing line, thankful indeed for their good supply of blasting powder. Some of the nearer animals were hit and tumbled to earth and were overrun and trampled by

others which followed. But the herd was divided and passed on either side. Mr. Dodge is of the belief that there must have been thousands and thousands of frenzied bison in that mad stampede. They heard from other hunters, later, who had seen the herd earlier in the day, that the buffalo covered the prairie for miles in every direction as far as the eye could see.

When daylight came, there were still a few buffalo straggling by the camping place. A small water hole was in a swale not far away. The men located themselves near it, and in the morning hours killed quite a number as the animals sought a drink after the night's run. As he remembers, they secured 23 hides, which was not such a bad day's kill after all. The green hides, when delivered at the railroad, brought an average of \$2.00 each, netting them \$46.00 for the hunt, besides what meat they wanted to secure. The sum of \$46.00 may not appeal to the reader of today as a very large amount—wouldn't much more than pay for one tire for your automobile. But to the pioneer it meant the needed clothing for the wife and babies, sugar and coffee for the family larder, and a few extra dimes to spend for recreation and amusement. It would not go far towards buying gasoline for the auto and tractor, tickets to the picture shows, golf club dues or oil stock, but it did come mighty handy, when the dug-out needed a rain-proof roof, or the horses were to be shod, or seed wheat or corn was required by the men who made it possible for their children of today to keep up with the procession of civilization.

The herd described above, seen in mid-summer of 1871, was, Mr. Dodge thinks, the last big herd that passed this way. For some years later buffalo were killed in the extreme western and northern parts of Kansas and in Colorado. As late as the eighties good sized herds of the wild bison were found in Wyoming, Nevada, and Utah. They seemed to have drifted farther north as they went west.



Mistake of a Gallant

“There was a sound of revelry by night, for Belgium’s chivalry had gathered there. The lights shone o’er fair women and brave men; bright eyes shone into eyes that smiled again, and all went merry as a marriage bell. On with the dance; let joy be unconfined; no sleep ’til morn when youth and pleasure meet to chase the golden hours with flying feet.”

Thus wrote one of the poets, describing a dance of olden times. I think the poem was one of the reading lessons in the old McGuffey’s third reader. Anyway, it had a ring to it that appealed to me when I attended the many dances we used to have in the pioneer days.

Talk about the lively (?) jazz music (?) of the twentieth century! Why, lads, that dance music would not be in it for a minute with the fiddling of Dan Luse, Ike Pritchard, or any of the old time musicians who set us the pace with "Monie Musk," "The Arkansaw Traveler," or the "Ein, Zwei, Drei" of the bygone days.

One fiddler (violinists were not born yet) was all we generally had to dance by; though occasionally, when a big dance was put on, a fiddler to play "second" was engaged, at as high a price as one or two dollars a night. Square dances predominated, but the waltz, schottische, gallop, Cecilian circle, and Virginia reel were sandwiched in occasionally to rest up on.

A friend, Mrs. Gwinn, called me up the other day and told me my "Early Day Episodes" would not be complete unless I told about the time I fanned Bell Brown (now Mrs. Dell Decker) with a broom; so here goes. If the older boys referred to in other "recollections" can stand the gaff, why, so can the writer.

That particular dance was held in the year 1879, if my memory is not at fault, in the Moses hall, upstairs over the G. N. & E. R. Moses hardware store. I was Miss Brown's escort to the dance. We had not missed any number that was announced and after a very lively quadrille, the ladies were seated to rest up a bit. Bell had no fan and was making signs to fan herself with her hand when I espied a broom with a short handle standing near, and grabbing it, proceeded to fan my dancing partner vigorously. The act was not particularly funny

until Bell let out a shriek of protest. That broom had just been used to sweep up some water spilled on the floor, and the half a dozen swipes I had made with it had covered the lady from head to foot with dirty water and dust. She had on a white costume, and so you can imagine the pickle she was in.

Another dance Charlie Dodge says I should tell about: A masquerade ball, given by the City Band, in what is now the Woodman Hall. The costumes were grotesque in many instances. It was during the early days of Prohibition "original packages." The writer's costume was an original package—an apple barrel, with the two heads cut out, hung under the arms with straps over the shoulders; below the barrel stuck out a not too plump pair of legs, terminating in wooden shoes. On my head, pulled down to the shoulders, was a hat box with a face painted on one side and in the rear a handle affixed to make it look like a beer mug, while over the top foamed white cotton. Did I dance in that costume you may ask? You bet your life I did! But I could not get nearly close enough to the ladies to step out in the round dances.

Some of the most enjoyable dances of those days were the country dances. A half a dozen of us town boys would hire the "Black Maria" as we called it, a carry-all owned and operated by one Mr. Brian. It had seats along the sides for twelve people—if they sat close—which we generally did. There was a habit formed when we used the Black Maria which may be practiced by the young people of these days for all I know. It was like this: When driving over the country roads if we struck a rut,

or a bump, it was fashionable to grab your girl companion about the waist and kiss her—a kiss for every bumper. Needless to say, at that time I was not a very strong advocate of hard, smooth surfaced roads.

One thing we boys kicked about was the “biled shirt” style which some of the new settlers from the East brought out with them. A soft wool or cotton shirt, with an open collar, was much more comfortable and handier for dress occasions. But eventually we gave in to the innovation of the stiff bosomed white shirt. I had one—yes I did—with stiff detachable collar, and a patent four-in-hand necktie with a slide in front you could pull down with a concealed string and disclose the printed word “Chestnuts” when you wanted to shut off some stale story. One time I got out of speaking terms with a friend, one C. H. Cason, because he had clandestinely borrowed my “biled” shirt on an occasion when I wanted to use it myself. But we eventually made up again and were good friends ever after.

By "Special" Delivery

Western Kansas owes much to the hardy pioneers who laid the foundation for this productive and prosperous region. Most of them were born of other pioneers of earlier days. All were filled with the same spirit of freedom of speech and action, love of fairness and justice, helpful in time of need, and with an unyielding ambition to overcome all obstacles, endure all hardships, in order that they might establish for themselves and their children that greatest of all boons, a comfortable home.

I like to think that somewhere in this broad land, maybe here in our midst, maybe in some far off border of Uncle Sam's domain, there lives a native born Kansas man, some 48 years of age, who was born in a passenger coach on a Homeseekers train on the A. T. & S. F. railroad at a point about halfway between Ellinwood and Great Bend.

I would like to know his name. I would like to follow him from the time he was a little toddler going to school in that sod schoolhouse on a Western Kansas prairie; when he was helping his father to load buffalo bones to haul to market; when he was gathering "chips" for the winter fuel supply; when he was following an ox-drawn plow to turn the virgin sod and tickle the long hidden elements of useful production in old Mother Earth. I would like to know him in social intercourse, in business,

in politics, in all the elements of Empire building which I am sure he entered into with the true Kansas spirit.

But I do not know his name. I can only record the incidents surrounding his entry into our midst.

Many of our older readers will remember John Bender, for many years a conductor on Santa Fe passenger trains running through Great Bend. No one who ever rode with John will forget that penetrating nasal demand, "Tickets, p-l-e-a-s-e." He was not fussy nor ostentatious. He wore no formal cloak of authority, nor did he try to impress his passengers with the idea that he was the "whole cheese" on that train. It was always a pleasure to ride with Conductor Bender and his crew.

Gus Schilling was one of his crew. Gus, now a retired south side farmer, a resident of this city, twisted the brakes, swung the lantern, assisted the passengers to mount and dismount the train, and did other things to help make John Bender's train a most popular train on which to ride. You will be surprised at the wonderful versatility of Brakeman Gus.

It was in the spring of 1876 that Gus demonstrated his ability to meet all emergencies and make himself useful to the traveling public. His train was west bound. The travel that day was light. A young woman, on her way to Dodge City to join her husband who had just taken a claim near there, became ill just about the time they were pulling into Ellinwood. She asked Gus to get off and get her some warm water. Then, as the train started up again, she gave him the key to her trunk,

which was in the baggage car and asked him to get some articles which she had a premonition she would need. Gus procured the things she wanted, returned with them, and, there being no other woman on the train and as he says, "nary a doctor," he proceeded to make himself useful.

Just before the train reached Great Bend, Gus went into the smoker ahead and Conductor Bender said to him:

"Say, Gus, how's that woman 'at was sick in the car back aways?"

"O, she's all right—getting on fine," replied Gus, "an' so is the boy." And Gus says that although Conductor Bender was an old married man with a "passel of kids" that was the first time John had any idea of what was going on.

And the boy? Well, that is the boy I was thinking of when I started to write of this somewhat unusual episode of early happenings. I wonder who he is, where he is, and how he is?

Mother Bickerdyke

No history of the War of the Rebellion would be complete if it did not give space to that famous war nurse, "Mother Bickerdyke," as the soldiers called her. She relieved suffering and cheered the hearts of many a boy in blue, devoting several years of her life to this work during that contest. Her great Mother heart took in vast horrors of the contest, and prompted her to do all and dare all to minister to the comfort, both physical and mental, of her soldier boys. No roughest weather nor official red tape kept her from the side of her boys in the hospitals or camps, and the long hours of many a night were spent by her in laboriously writing letters and messages for the men to their loved ones at home. It is said, too, that she willingly ministered to wounded of the enemy when chance arose, exemplifying her woman's love and faith in the teachings of the Bible.

Mother Bickerdyke, with her two sons, James and Hiram, located in Great Bend in the early seventies. In 1874, the year after the great grasshopper plague passed over Kansas and stripped practically the entire state of all growing vegetation, she took it upon herself to go back into the Eastern states, solicited donations of food and clothing and sent them into Kansas for the relief of settlers who had been eaten out by the hoppers. Some of these supplies were shipped to Great Bend and distributed to the needy.

C. E. Dodge tells of one time in the early winter when a lot of the supplies were stored in one of the rooms of the court house. He and M. B. Fitts slept in the north side room that was almost full of wearing apparel of all kinds. Charlie says that one night after he had gone to bed, M. B. came in for the night. Charlie paid no attention to his roommate until he looked up and saw Mr. Fitts standing before him arrayed from head to foot in woman's clothes. Mort paraded about in front of him a bit, saying he was "giving a style show." He then took off the rig he had on and donned another, and did some more fancy steps—all for the amusement of himself and his roommate.

Later Charlie changed roommates, George Moses sleeping with him. One cold night they lay shivering under scant bed clothes, when the door opened quietly and Mother Bickerdyke came in with a lot of heavy army blankets, and threw them over the boys, saying: "You boys are cold, I know; here, take these for the night."

James Bickerdyke was a great student and of a very religious turn of mind. He taught school in this county and the counties north. There are doubtless still some of our grey headed readers who were students of Jim Bickerdyke. Remember that chin of his?

Hiram Bickerdyke was of an entirely different turn of mind. He was younger by several years than Jim and was given to the gay life of the plainsman. It hurt Jim to hear Hy swear, and to see him do other cowboy stunts

practiced at the time. Hy had preempted a quarter section of land a few miles west of town. One day he traded his rights in the land for four Texas broncos. When Jim heard of it, he took Hy to task. He met his younger brother on Allen's corner. Taking him by the shoulder he said:

"Here, you young fool, what do you mean by trading off your claim?"

Hy had a few drinks under his belt and was in a fighting mood. He grabbed Jim and threw him down on his back; jumped a-straddle of him and grabbing his ears on either side bumped the back of his head on the ground a few times, saying:

"D—n it, Jim, ain't four horses better'n a few measly acres o' nothin'?"

At another time in the summer of 1874, Charlie Dodge, Jim and Hy went on a buffalo hunting trip to the plains in Pawnee County. They had a wagon, but Jim rode on horseback. When he got ahead of the wagon some distance Hy would call out to Jim to stop and let them catch up.

"Hey, Jim—Jimmy—wait a minute," but Jim plugged along.

"Hey there, Jim, you d—d amblin' fool you, wait 'til we catch up, or I'll be d—d if I don't cuss some more."

Then Jim would stop, let them catch up with him, and would start raking his brother over the coals for swearing. Hy would only laugh long and loud, and then sing:

“Some take sugar in their tea,
But I take sugar in my cof-f-e-e.”

Another story of the inherent devilment of Hy Bickerdyke: In the summer of the early seventies he, Don Dodge, a man named Shaw, and two or three others, went down on the Rattlesnake, south of Great Bend, on a buffalo hunt. Don says Hy had one peculiarity not common with buffalo hunters. When shooting he did not close one eye and take sight over the rifle, but looked with both eyes; and he was as good a shot as were those who took sight more deliberately the old-fashioned way.

On this hunt the boys camped one hot day about noon to rest their team until the cool of the evening. Great waves of scorching heat swept over the unbroken prairies. Shaw crawled under the wagon (the horses having been picketed out) and went to sleep. Hy got hold of the end of the wagon tongue, dug holes with his hunting knife in the hard baked earth to get a purchase with his heels, and carefully pulled the wagon a few feet until Shaw was left out in the sun. This soon woke him up, and he was raging hot—inside and out. He wanted to lick the fellow who pulled the wagon off of him. Hy looked demure and innocent, and none of the others gave him away. After frothing around a bit, telling what a “bad man” he was with the shooting irons, and what he would do to the fellow who dared to remove his awning again, Shaw once more crawled under the wagon and went to sleep. Hy, assuring himself that the fellow was again sound asleep, carefully removed the

guns and hunting knife from the slumberer, then proceeded once more to move the wagon.

Shaw awakened this time hotter than ever. When he sought his guns and hunting knife and discovered they were gone, he seized the neck-yoke from the wagon and made for Hy, whom he saw watching him, with a broad grin on his face. When Shaw approached, Hy pulled his (Shaw's own) gun and covering him said:

"D—n your hide; come a step nearer an' I'll plug you. Be a good sport now, an' take a joke like a white man."

Hiram left here in the gold rush to the Black Hills and was never afterwards heard of. James died, I think, at Bunker Hill, north of here, where he had served as County Superintendent of Schools for a number of terms. Mother Bickerdyke, I think, is also buried in Russell County.

A Big Bluffer Bested

Physical skill and endurance, developed by thorough training and backed by a determination to make the best of any contest, is admired by American citizens of all classes and conditions, by all who possess the red blood of courage that made it possible for our forefathers to conquer the wilderness and turn it into productiveness and beauty.

This short story concerns one of Barton County's pioneers, whose energies are spent, whose life work has been finished, but the memory of whose kind and cheerful disposition, loyalty to home and fireside and to his adopted country, will ever linger with us.

I will relate one incident concerning this man, which occurred in the summer of 1883. It was described by E. L. Wood, our south side harness and saddlery man. Mr. Wood—"Waxie," as we all know him, says he and Myron Gillmore, one of the early day sheriffs of our county, were driving down Broadway one afternoon, and when they were in front of John Snyder's shoe shop, then about in the middle of the block north of the square, there rode up a young cowboy, a big, well-built lad weighing about 200, who had been in town long enough to get pretty well "tanked up" and who was hunting trouble. He yanked his cow pony back onto its haunches, let out a couple of yells, and remarked:

"I'm the best man in seventeen states! I can lick any

s—of a b— in this corporation. I'm a wild cat an' it's my time to scratch!"

About that time Richard Taylor, who lived on a farm northwest of town a few miles, was coming out of the A. W. Gray hardware store, and hearing the racket walked over to investigate. Dick was then a man between 30 and 40, I should judge; about five feet five, and weighed about 135. As he approached, the big cowboy repeated his challenge, with all its vulgar trimmings.

"Mister," said Dick, "you modify that statement and I'll take you on."

Big boy stared down at the little man and asked:

"What d'ye mean—modify?"

"I mean," said Dick, "I am no s—of a b—; and if you'll cut out that part of your remarks an' come through like a gentleman, I'll go you a few rounds."

Big boy let out a laugh and an oath or two. Dick took off his coat and hat, laid them down deliberately and approached the big bluffer. The latter dismounted, dropped the reins of his mount to the ground and said as Dick approached him:

"Say, I don't like to hit a little runt like you," and a broad grin spread over his face.

Said Dick: "Stranger, take off that coat and hat, and put up your dukes."

"I don't haff to take 'em off," said big boy, as he stepped forward and with his long right arm shot out a blow that should have knocked the small man ten feet if it had landed where he aimed it.

But Dick was not there when the big fist arrived; like lightning he had ducked, and in an instant had landed on the big boy's wind with a left, and on his ribs with a right, following up with more of the same, and a tap on the jaw.

Big boy by this time realized that a scrap was on. He had the sand to stay and take gruelling punishment for several minutes. But he could not get in a single blow past Dick's guard.

Finally Dick went to work in earnest. He touched up his opponent's eyes, bloodied his nose, and finally with a swift uppercut reached the big chin, and the cowboy went down for the count. Getting to his feet, he held up one hand to indicate he had enough, and after breathing a bit, he said to Dick:

"My friend, you're the best big little man I ever seen. An' I don't bar no big ones nuther."

I heard about this scrap when I came back to Great Bend in 1886, but it was later when I first saw Mr. Taylor in action. It was at a "house warming" that E. R. Moses, Sr., gave at the completion of his handsome residence. Many of the guests who were there will remember the incident.

After an elegant dinner had been served, the male guests were invited to the basement rooms to smoke, play billiards, etc. Boxing gloves were produced, and a number of the younger guests put on some clever exhibitions of skill and endurance. General Chapman, I think, was one who took on all comers. Some one sug-

gested that the older men match up and put on the gloves. Dick Taylor was then one of the older crowd. He put on a pair of gloves and asked for a sparring partner. I do not recall that there were any with good memories who volunteered to match him. But there were half a dozen or so of the younger crowd, who thought they knew something about the art of boxing, who took Dick on. And the way he played with those boys was some sensation. Not a one of them could touch him; he would feint and dodge, sidestep and walk all around them, tapping them when and where he pleased, and fill in the spaces with his quaint and characteristic comments.

Mr. Taylor was not a professional boxer, but had been trained in the manly art of self-defense in his boyhood days in Old England.

An Unusual Foot Race

I have been a baseball fan since away back in the sixties, when we kids made our own baseballs by unraveling the yarn of an old woolen sock or stocking, winding it tightly into a ball of the proper size and covering it with the leather from the top of an old boot. I had never seen a real, honest-to-goodness regulation baseball until I was a stripling in my early 'teens.

In those days the games we played with a ball were ante-over, two-old-cat, four-old-cat, and long town, or town ball. Four-old-cat was the nearest to the game of the present day, as there were four bases: first, second, third and the home base; and the game of the present day is quite likely a lively kitten of the four-old-cats of yesterday. Remember, you old grizzly brothers?

It was baseball all right, for those games—with the exception of ante-over—were played with a ball and a bat, pitcher and catcher, and bases to be run. The umpire, that autocrat of the diamond and butt for the jibes and sarcasms of anyone who sees fit to exhibit a grouch, was a later addition to the game, and was invented along with the wire mask and padded gloves. Primitive baseball was played with bare hands, and interpretation of the rules governing the game was left to the honor of the players.

So, being a consistent fan, I attend every game I can, root for the home team, and try to give the visitors credit for any good playing they may exhibit.

The other day, in company with Ed Hotchkiss, I drove out to the Tenth Street ball park in the flivver to witness a game. As we neared the ball park, both Ed and I seemed to be thinking of the same things, happenings of the bygone days in that same spot, the grove, wherein is located the ball park.

In the eighties and nineties of the past century that piece of ground was known as Zutavern's grove.

In the late seventies or early eighties this grove was planted to forest trees along the three sides of the triangle, but a space comprising five or six acres was left in the middle for the cultivation of various kinds of crops. A part of this space is now the baseball grounds—grandstand, diamond, etc.

Being close to the Arkansas river, the trees grew rapidly, and in a few years after their planting, they made a nice grove. The first county fair held in Barton County was on these grounds. As I approached the spot the other day, I saw, in my mind, that early day assembly. There were George Moses, My Gillmore, John Pascoe, George Miltimore, John Brinkman, Squire E. J. Dodge, A. W. Gray, and many others who now journey with the "silent caravan." I see them hustling about the grounds and with warm cordiality making the county fair visitors feel at home and enjoy themselves. That was, I think, in the fall of 1887.

But what I had in mind when I started to write this reminiscence was an incident recalled by Mr. Hotchkiss as we rolled along toward the ball grounds.

In those days the people of this county, more especially the Germans, were strong advocates of what they termed "personal liberty." In other words, they believed that no state legislature had a right to tell them what they should or should not eat or drink—especially drink. And they had their beer at their social gatherings, as they and their fathers had had it in the Fatherland. Zutavern's grove was an ideal place for summer picnics and gatherings for evening amusements. A dance platform, bowling alley, turning pole and other devices for physical exhibitions of skill and endurance, together with the necessary stands and booths for the handling of drinks and eats, were erected.

A popular organization of the time was the German-American Volksverein, and their picnics and celebrations were held in the Zutavern grove. Other picnic parties were also held there.

At one of these latter gatherings (this particular one being for men only) the crowning event of the day was a little out of the usual line. There had been the usual turning and tumbling stunts and general social mixing. The man with the maul and spigot had been kept judiciously busy and everybody was in a jolly mood.

Joe Jindrake, a cigar maker, and a recent addition to the business industries of the town, was in attendance as a new member of their social club. The boys thought Joe ought to be given an initiation into their ranks. Bill Zutavern and A. S. Allen were called upon to arrange for the initiation, which they did.

Joe was told that before he could be taken in as a full fledged member he would have to run an endurance race with their best athlete, Bill Zutavern. Bill was represented as a regular bear-cat to run, so in this case, to give the new member a fair show in the running, Bill would wear his shoes, pants and coat, while Joe would be permitted to strip to the hide and run in the nude. Joe was inclined to think he could beat Bill any old way they ran, but was finally persuaded that he had better strip, which he did. The race was to be run from the west to the east end of the open field, then back to the starting point. The field had been listed to corn, the listed rows running north and south, and the runners would therefore have no smooth track. Besides this, the hot winds had made the corn blades into veritable saws, and sand burrs carpeted the ground for most of the course. Bill knew this, but Joe did not.

"All set—one, two, three—GO!" called the master of ceremonies, and they were off.

The plan was for Bill, who really was the crack runner of the bunch, to make a sprint ahead of Joe as they got to the thickest of the sand burrs, then drop down in front of Joe and make that naked runner tumble sprawling into the clinging embrace of those burrs.

Bill plunged ahead and tumbled to the ground all right in front of Joe. But he got too far ahead before he tumbled, and Joe gathered himself for a leap, and jumped clear over Bill, and forged ahead. He made the turn and was well on his way back before Bill again got

in motion. And of course Joe won the race. But he spent a tickling half hour scraping the sand burrs from the soles of his feet, while his legs showed many a scratch from the dry corn blades.

Those early day Germans were indeed a jovial, sociable bunch. And it is due to them to state that so far as the agricultural development of our county was concerned those men were the untiring, hard working leaders. They had their time to work, and they deserved a time to play. A few years later than the dates given here, in the closing years of the nineteenth century, they organized the "Geburtstag Gesellschaft," a friendly social organization, which met once a month and celebrated the birthday of one of their members. The membership was restricted to 36. After that number was attained, no one else could get in until there was a vacancy caused by death or a removal from the locality.

Could those forest trees which border the baseball park be able to speak, what a mass of amusing incidents and harmless pranks they could unfold.

Evolution of the Slicker

Remember when you used to see the cowboys riding into town in rainy or stormy weather, their broad brimmed hats and top boots looking all right, but the rest of them encased in long, stiff, bright yellow coats? When you asked the name of this adornment you were told it was a "slicker."

These slickers were made of closely woven cloth, soaked in oil to make them water proof. They were useful, if not ornamental; they kept out the rain and snow, cold winds and scratching thorns from the human body. That was the first kind of slicker with which I became familiar.

Then came a well dressed, suave and loquacious young man driving up the street in an open barouche, with a negro banjo player by his side. He stopped at a prominent corner; his banjo player played and sang; then he made a little talk to the crowd that had gathered about him; told about the things he was going to sell the good people at a ridiculously low price. Then he sold various articles of apparent value until he got quite a number scattered through the crowd. Then he called in all the articles he had sold saying he would redeem them at double the amount he had sold them for. After some more music and songs, and the telling of jokes, he again began selling articles, to be redeemed—as he gave the people to understand—at double what they paid for them. But this time he got better prices for his wares,

and of course a much larger number of customers, as all thought of the time of redemption. When he figured that he had stocked the market, and there would be no more purchasers, he whipped up his horses and drove out of town with a satchel full of money; while those who had purchased found they had paid good hard dollars for flimsy articles worth but a few cents. And the name "Slicker" was given this manipulator of human credulity.

Then came the time of the county fairs, with the shell game slicker, the wheel of fortune slicker, and other nomads of the games of chance where the rewards were all with the men who promoted the games.

Then the human slicker advanced with the march of civilization. He came as a promoter of milk condensing and other factories that were to revolutionize the business interests of the community; as a seeker for long term franchises for public utilities; as a promoter of new political organizations, etc.; all, as he smoothly demonstrated, being for the sole benefit of the dear people.

As the farmers prospered, and in their wake the merchant, the banker and the laboring man, another class of slickers came on the scene; selling mining stock, oil stock and wonderfully productive lands in the swamps of Florida. Our state had to enact the famous "Blue Sky" law to protect the people against this kind of slicker.

The World War came, and another class of slickers was organized. They secured Government contracts and

munitions plant monopolies that made multi-millionaires so fast that the whole world stood agape.

Then the official slicker. Selling privileges and financial tips; buying concessions; juggling reports; subsidizing publications; financing propaganda—and sometimes doing as did the early day street slicker—whipping up the horses and driving away with satchels full of slicker millions filched from the people.

It is a far cry from the cheap and useful slicker of the cowboy days to the expensive and useless slicker of New York City and Washington, D. C. The men who wore the slicker of the seventies were “he-men” of the open spaces, 100 per cent American, and fearless for the right in all emergencies. Can that be truthfully said of those men over whom recently was being poured the filthy oil of the Teapot Dome?

Buffalo and Mouse

Among the pioneer experiences of Central and Western Kansas first settlers, few draw the absorbing interest that is given to stories told by men who hunted the wild buffalo, either for pleasure or profit. When one of the "old boys" begins to report incidents of his buffalo hunting days, political or religious discussions cease, the quoit club declares an intermission, real estate deals are off temporarily and we don't give a darn whether the wife bobs her hair or perpetrates a permanent wave.

Don Dodge was not a professional bison killer, but at various times during 1871 and 1872, when there was still quite a lot of buffalo grazing in this part of the Arkansas Valley, he joined hunting parties, sometimes being away on the range a week or so at a time. Here are some of the interesting parts of one of the hunting trips we heard him recently relate:

On this hunt the party was made up of five men and three teams. The men were: Wall and Don Dodge, J. P. Bissel, Arthur Moses and John Gruber.

Their camping outfit, guns and ammunition, flour, bacon and lard, salt and coffee were all loaded up and they were ready to start on a two weeks hunt—at least they thought they were until Arthur Moses, who had a sweet tooth, said:

"Say, fellers, we ain't got no syrup—we must have some sweet'nin'."

So they drove to where John Hubbard had a little store (this was in 1871) down on the Walnut, about where the Harve Johnson house was built, to get some 'lasses. Hubbard found a big stone jug lying on its side in the corner of the room, and drew it full of syrup from a barrel. Then they were on their way.

The first day's drive found no buffalo, and they turned into camp for the night, selecting a spot where they could see a long distance in all directions so as not to be taken by surprise by a possible band of roving Indians, as some were reported then off the reservation to the south. Having brought along some dry wood from the timber along the creek, they soon built their campfires and prepared their evening meal.

John Gruber was then a tall, muscular young man, a good shot, and companionable; not in any manner quarrelsome, and full of droll humor. John is gone now to the "happy hunting grounds" of the hereafter, but he has left with us some sturdy sons and daughters who are still among our valued citizens.

John was the first of the party to tap the syrup jug. As he did so a small lump bubbled out upon his plate. He forked it over carefully, and discovered it to be a young mouse about as large as the end of your finger. Flipping it off his plate he remarked:

"O, vell, one leetle mouses don't hurt nuttings—he stay in one place," and went on with his meal.

Don says the rest of the bunch—even Art, of the

sweet tooth—lost desire for syrup; but could not refrain from joshing John a bit. Laughingly he said:

“Dat’s all foolishness—yust one leetle mouses in all that sweetness don’t count.”

At the dinner hour the next day John was again the first to tap the syrup jug. Blub, blub, and then some more blubs—and six other leetle mouses rolled out. John looked at the collection of preserved rodents on his plate, then getting up and remarking, “Too dam much mouses,” smashed the jug on a wagon wheel and declined to eat any dinner.

Towards evening they sighted a herd of buffalo, and the “mouses” were forgotten in the excitement of the kill. They did not open fire at long range, as some might think the safest way to attack those dangerous brutes, but kept out of sight of the animals as long as they could until they got as close as possible, then with a rush rode into the midst of the herd and fired right and left as rapidly as possible, aiming to place their bullets in the most vital spots, preferably just behind the front leg, or reaching the brain through the eye. Few bullets would penetrate the skull of a full grown buffalo, so if an animal charged head on it was safest to dodge to one side and get him as he passed by.

They stayed out on that hunt the full two weeks, ranging as far west as Fort Dodge, and came back with all three wagons loaded with hides, and the choice cuts of meat from the younger animals.

Of that hunting party only one remains to tell the

story. All the others have gone to their last rest. Also, the great herds of buffalo which fed and multiplied upon the trackless expanse of verdure which has now been turned into productive farms and stock ranches, have been destroyed, and are known only in legend and story by the people of the present day. For many years the bleaching bones of those slaughtered monarchs of the plains lay strewn upon the greening sod, mute evidences of once vigorous lives snapped out by the relentless advance of civilization.

The Good Samaritan

Much has been written and told about the rough men and women who accompanied the empire builders to the new western towns of Kansas from the time such towns were first laid out in town lots until the advance of civilization drove the undesirable elements into other fields, or the crack of six-guns in the hands of town marshals, or sheriffs, or liquor crazed rivals of the underworld, snuffed out their tempestuous lives.

Much has also been told of the hard-hearted and soulless acts of some of the proprietors of the dance halls and saloons of those early days; so that one might be inclined to believe there were no elements of good or honesty, nothing of the milk of human kindness among that class of border town residents.

A few incidents to disprove that belief is due some of the men who, in the early history of Great Bend, were engaged in the saloon business.

There were among the early settlers of this community, sturdy pioneers who helped to conquer what was then a barren waste of wind-swept prairie and who, unfortunately for themselves and families, were addicted to too liberal an indulgence in strong drink, although otherwise good husbands and fathers. One of such, an Irishman, stalwart and muscular, determined and unafraid, settled on government land some miles northwest of town. We will call him "Tim," although that was not his name. His sons and daughters are likely to be some

of the best citizens of the community. And Tim would have been so now, when saloons are unknown, and the cup that sears as well as cheers would not be set enticingly before him whenever he came to town, or the smell of intoxicating liquor greet his nostrils from out of about every other door he passed as he walked down the street.

Coming to town one day after having sold some grain or live stock, Tim proceeded to take on the usual "jag," to celebrate, as they said then. He was gloriously drunk, but in fairly good humor when he entered the saloon of a certain man (whose name I will also withhold for the same reason I gave Tim his alias) and swaggering up to the bar demanded whiskey.

The saloon man (I will call him Jack) saw that Tim was carrying about all with which he could navigate, and knowing that a few more drinks would lay him out, told him:

"No, Tim, you've got a-plenty. You better get in your wagon and hit the trail for home."

Tim blustered about, threatening dire things he would do to Jack, and wound up with the remark:

"You think I ain't got the spondulix to pay for my drinks, hey? Think I'm broke, do you? What do you think o' that?"

And he pulled out of his trousers pocket a roll of bills as big as a nubbin of corn and shoved it under Jack's nose across the bar. Then he thrust it back—or thought he did—into his pocket. But the money instead of going

into his jeans dropped on the floor. Jack saw this, and as Tim staggered towards the door he called after him:

"Better pile into your wagon and get out of town, Tim, before some of them slickers get that wad."

He saw no more of Tim that day; but about a week later Tim again entered the saloon, sober this time, and looking rather crestfallen. It so happened that no one else was at the bar as he came in. He went up to Jack and remarked:

"Bejabbers, Jack, you was roight the other day. Some son-of-a-gun did copper that roll, 'fore I left town. An' they was some forty dollars in it, too. You told me I had 'nuff. Guess I had too d—— much."

Then Jack reached under the bar and bringing out the roll of bills, handed it to Tim.

"That's all right, Tim, my boy. The feller who got that roll don't want to keep it." and he explained to Tim how the money had dropped to the floor when he thought he had put it in his pocket.

Here is another incident: A man with the same hanker for liquor as had the Irishman told of above, came in from his claim out on the edge of the Cheyenne Bottoms one cold, wintry day, accompanied by his good wife and several small children. He took the wife and children into a grocery store near the old Southern hotel corner and told them to stay there until he came back, after paying for some groceries and settling a charge account he owed the grocer. Then he left for saloon row.

Hours went by, and the weather became worse hourly, but Ned (although that was not his name) did not show up. The grocer noticed the wife and small children hovering about the stove, and that the woman was crying pitifully, but trying to hold in her emotions from the children and outsiders.

Finally, as it grew near sundown, the grocer asked the woman what was the matter. She told him she was afraid Ned was on a spree again or in some gambling game. She said he had sold a bunch of cattle, and had a lot of money with him. It was growing colder, and they ought to be on their way home to look after the stock. And she feared the children would suffer from cold on the long drive home.

The grocer thought over the situation a bit, then told her he believed he could get Ned started home. She should get the team and drive around in the alley back of the store and wait there.

Going down the street a block, he located Ned in Jack's saloon having a glorious time with a lot of boon companions. He took Jack outside and talked with him a bit, then got Ned's attention, drew him into the back part of the saloon, and whispered to him:

"Say, Ned, do you know 'Hawkshaw' (Frank D. Wilson was town marshal then and we called him Hawkshaw) is looking for you? Says he'll run you in. He just went down the street ahead of me; asked about you at the store, too. Say, listen, I think we can give him the slip. Let's sneak out the back door here, slip up the

alley, and I'll bring your wagon 'round back and you get in and skedaddle out of town."

Ned spent some time in cussing Hawkshaw and the town in general, but finally permitted the groceryman to pilot him up the alley; help him into the back end of the wagon and covered him over carefully with some comforts and buffalo robes, and then warned him to keep perfectly quiet and they would put one over on Hawkshaw all right.

The wife and children were already loaded up, but Ned was too drunk to notice that coincidence, and the family got out of town and home.

Ned often joked with the grocer about how they fooled Hawkshaw. But Grif—there, I let the cat out of the bag as to who the grocer was. Ask Treasurer Griffith to give you further particulars.

Both of the weaker actors in these early-day dramas have passed away, but the action of the two men who befriended them in the time of need proves that in those days there were men who "had a heart" and were never slow in emulating the example of the Good Samaritan.



Some Political Stunts

In recalling some of the things which happened during the seventies and eighties, when as publisher of the Barton County Democrat and the Great Bend Daily Graphic, I was called upon to take a more or less active part in every political campaign, I do not want to give away any secrets or to cast any reflection upon the actions of my co-workers in the cause of Democracy, nor upon the persistent though respected "opposition" which in those days—and even later—was noted for its "beastly majorities" in Kansas. I just want to recall some of the funny things and happenings—not so much to point a moral as to adorn a tale.

So, I hope that our latest voters—the women, God bless 'em—will believe when I say that such incidents as here recorded can never happen again in these enlightened days. The days of booze and buncombe have happily passed, and the voters are concerned more with the effect of their political action upon their business or environments, than with the effect upon their stomachs or so-called rights.

Jerry Simpson—"Sockless Jerry"—was nominated for Congress in this, the "Big Seventh" district, the largest congressional district in physical area in the United States, by the Populists in a convention held in Great Bend. The Democratic congressional convention was called to be held at Pratt later. Some of the Democrats wanted to "fuse" with the Pops and endorse Jerry, while another faction of our party—they called themselves "Straight-Outs"—wanted to put a Democratic candidate in the field, which action would of course divide the opposition to the Republicans and insure the election of that party's candidate.

When we Democrats assembled at Pratt for our convention, a counting of noses was the first thing of importance to be attended to, to determine which faction had the majority at the convention—the Fusionists or the Straight-Outs. I was a fusionist, and was also secretary of the Congressional Committee.

By noon of the convention day we were feeling pretty good over the result of our counting of noses. But about that time there came to town a foxy Straight-Out, all

by his lonesome, but with a determination to "do or die" for his belief in Straight-Out-ism.

And, by the way, that dogged determination and loyalty to any cause he championed has won for him the enviable record of being one of the most able attorneys in this part of Kansas, and against great handicap.

He was alone, but he was loaded. Besides having the votes of his own county delegation in his jeans, he also had the proxies—that is, the written right to cast their votes as he saw fit—of the delegates of five or six of the southwestern counties of the district, making a total, I think, of 20 votes that he could cast for the nomination of a "straight" Democratic candidate, and against Jerry Simpson and fusion.

Sedgwick county was in this district then, and there were some "jugglers" of parts in their big delegation—practically a unanimous delegation for "Fusion."

These "jugglers" got busy. They became most friendly with our foxy Straight-Out with the big wad of proxies, and as the hour for the convention came around, Mr. Foxy was quietly laid away in a hotel room with a jag that kept him there for the rest of the day with his twenty proxies in his pocket. Old John Barley-corn had scored another fatal blow against a devotee.

What our friend said when he awoke later in the evening and learned from his Wichita friends that the convention was over and that Jerry was the properly named Democratic candidate, was a plenty, but too hot for publication.

In our county campaigns many amusing things hap-

pened. There were two places in the county where men of supposed good standing with all the voters of their precincts, "worked" numerous jolly beer parties, by working our central committee officers for from \$10 to \$20 at a clip with which to buy kegs of "suds" for their neighbors—which they were sure would make their precincts "safe for Democracy" on election day. But when the Democratic managers discovered that the same men, in the same old way, were working the same contributions for the same purpose from the Republican managers to make the votes of their precincts "safe" for the Republican ticket, there was a falling off of confidence and a cutting off of contributions for "suds."

WOULD NOT TAKE A DARE

In the eighties a Democratic convention was called to nominate a county ticket. The Republicans had already nominated a good, strong ticket, and their candidate for county attorney was considered an exceptionally strong man, and one it would be hard to beat. James W. Clarke was urged by the Democrats to stand for their nomination. Jim was well aware of what he would be up against, and being a young lawyer just establishing himself here, was in doubt about his ability to make the race and the showing his friends would expect. While talking the matter over in caucus one good old Democrat, also from the South, as was Jim, said in a bantering manner:

"Oh, Jim don't dast to do it."

At that Mr. Clarke announced that he would stand for the nomination.

The ticket was nominated, a red hot campaign carried on, in which Jim took an active part. But, as Jim had all along suspected, he was booked for Salt Creek—among the defeated.

After the official count was made, and there was no question about the result of the election, a few of us were gathered in Jim's office to talk over the results, the whys and wherefores, and to offer condolence, when Jim chipped in:

"Well, fellows, it's all over, and it's like this: You all have been boys once, I guess, and I was, too. One day I was out in the timber with a passel of other boys, an' we found a little swale or holler full of tadpoles—yo' know what them tadpoles is—all head and mouth like these Republicans, an' only a suggestion of a tail. Well, we were all a-foolin' around an' handlin' them, when one of the boys said:

"'Hey, Jimmie Clarke, I dare yo' to swaller one—like this—' and he pretended to gulp it down.

"'Dare yo' to, dare yo' to,' he kep' on sayin', and I wouldn't take a dare—I swallered mine. Had a premonition as to what would follow next—but I swallered mine. Same with this election."

In a later election Mr. Clarke was elected to that office by a big majority of votes, and he made as good and efficient a prosecuting attorney as the county has ever had. The people had become better acquainted with him, and his sterling qualities of manhood and business integrity won for him deserved success through all the years he was with us.

Our Mennonite Pioneers

To write of the early days in the history of Barton County and not give space to a description of the first settlement of Mennonites, those sturdy, untiring and extremely conscientious men and women who braved the terrors of the ocean and left the Fatherland in Russia because of religious oppression, with laudable desire to make new and better homes for themselves and children, would be an unjustifiable omission by any recorder of pioneer events.

Many of the children and grandchildren of those early refugees are now numbered among the best citizens of our county. A description of their pioneer forefathers is in no manner a reflection upon them, but is given for the instruction of the younger generation, and as an example of what never-ceasing industry and thoughtful frugality will accomplish. Among those pioneer Mennonites were the Unruhs, Boeses, Schmidts, Schultzs and the Mulls.

Their first settlement was in 1875, at Dundee, half way between Great Bend and Pawnee Rock, being, I think, on Santa Fe railroad land which they bought. They divided the land into long narrow strips running north and south, and built their homes, mostly of sod construction, in a group on the south end, along the railroad track, in a community formation and not scattered miles apart on sections, half sections or quarters, as did the other settlers. And that community

never had need of being visited by the officers of the law in search of outlaws, horse thieves or cattle rustlers. It was ever a peaceable and law abiding community.

They were—and their progeny still are—a race of sturdy build; their lives frugal, and little sickness plagued them. And all were money makers.

When they first began to come to town with the products they had to sell, their appearance was always noticeable. In the winter both men and women wore large, loose coats of sheepskin, reaching to their boot tops—which were also of sheepskin, with the wool inside—and the only way we could tell the men from the women was by their head gear, the men wearing heavy fur caps made of hides of wolves from the Russian steppes, and the women wore small, close fitting bonnets, or a piece of bright colored woolen goods wound about their heads. They were not used to sidewalks, and they would invariably prefer to walk in the middle of the street. Their wagons, together with their household furniture and cooking utensils, they had brought with them to this country. Those wagons were a curiosity; low but heavy wheels, the wagon box an immense affair built in panels, boat shaped, higher at each end than in the middle, about 4 feet deep and 10 feet long—veritable “prairie schooners.”

They always had something to sell or trade for groceries, dry goods, and so on. In summer it was hay, vegetables, beef, cattle, spring chickens; and later, wheat; and in the winter it was butter, eggs, bacon, lard and poultry.

I remember one old gentleman, well up in the sixties when he came over from the old country, whose specialty was hay—"g-o-o-d h-a-y" he would always assure you. He had a two-horse wagon but only one horse; so he trained a cow to work with the horse, and was often seen in Great Bend with his load of hay drawn by his oddly matched team. He would also sometimes come to market in a light spring wagon with but his one horse hitched on one side of the tongue, as he could not then afford a pair of shafts.

They were shrewd bargainers, and it was a mighty slick storekeeper who got the better of them in a trade. In time they abandoned the idea of farming in community manner, and adopted the methods of other settlers; added to their holdings from year to year; built large and comfortable farm residences, barns and granaries; equipped themselves with the best modern machinery and branched out into all lines of business.

I venture the assertion that today the dollars invested in automobiles alone by the descendants of those pioneer Mennonites would duplicate the original investment of their forefathers in their first homes thousands of times. They have, in their community west of Great Bend, one of the finest church buildings in the state.

“Shooting Up” a Town

Much has been written concerning incidents of the early cowboy days of western Kansas; some of it by men who spoke from actual experiences, and some by others endowed with vivid imaginations. When we go to the movies and see the cowboy stunts pulled off in the pictures, we sometimes think the action has been overdrawn, and at other times that the wild Westerner has not been fairly represented—too much “chaps” and sombrero, and not enough of the jolly, happy-go-lucky spirit of fun and frolic of the cowboys I knew. However that may be, I shall try truthfully to describe what I believe to have been the last “shooting up” of Great Bend by the boys of the range.

It was in the early fall of 1877, the year after I landed in the town. About three o'clock one afternoon I heard shooting, accompanied by the “Yip, yip, whoopee” of a couple of male voices, and the clatter of hoofs coming up Main Street. Two cowboys who had ridden in off the range to “licker up,” had pretty well completed the “lickering” job, and were ready to “shoot up the old town” and mosey along.

They came clattering up the street, their ponies on the run; they swayed back and forth on the ponies, sometimes, with one leg over the saddle horn, leaning over and scraping the dirt of the street with their swinging hats. Each one had a big revolver, and they fired in the air as they came. I do not think they aimed

at anyone, but occasionally the bullets from their guns did not go straight up, but landed in the upper part of some store building. When they were opposite the Clayt and Ed Moses store building—about where Henry Born’s place is now—a young lady, Miss Ella Miller, who lived with her parents over the Moses store, came out on the awning to see what the racket was. One of the boys yelled:

“Hi, there’s a d—d purty girl,” and with a yip, yip, and a bang from the revolver the boys rode on.

Incidentally, the girl found that one of their bullets had lodged in the window casing not two feet from where she had stood. I do not believe the lads had shot at her—for generally those fellows hit what they aim at. But I do believe they were not liars, and that the one who said “there’s a purty girl” was eminently correct, for about three years later I married that girl, and have heard her tell our grandchildren about that incident.

The two cowboys circled on Broadway, to the present Barton County Mills Office corner, then rode north onto the prairie about two hundred yards, and dismounted, presumably to hit the bottle again, and to consult whether to “hit the trail,” or go back to town and “do it over again.”

While they were thus consulting, George Moses appeared on the scene with a Winchester rifle. He approached the boys to within speaking distance, but not close enough for them to get action with their six-guns, and drawing down on them with his rifle; he told them

to "Mosey along—get out of there; git quick." And they got.

For a few years after that there would occasionally drift in a regular range man; but I believe that was the last time any "shooting up" of Great Bend was attempted.

There were times in the seventies and eighties when local talent, or the shifting riff-raff to be found in all new countries, would fill up at the numerous drink emporiums which flourished in about every third or fourth business house along Main Street or around the public square, and attempt to run amuck. But the Sheriffs and Town Marshals of those days were men of grit and quick action, and soon controlled any unruly or dangerous "booze-fighters." Among those officers were F. D. Wilson of this city, and Cal Crilley of Oklahoma. Others, who now have "passed in their checks" and gone to peaceful rest, were George Moses, Jim Gainsford, Myron Gillmore, Jim Dalziel and Ed Tyler, whose good deeds are written on our tablets of memory.

Tom's Spotted Pony

"Good mornin', Ben, how's every old thing this mornin' " was the greeting tossed at Ben Negbaur by Col. Tom Stone, proprietor of the Southern Hotel, as he passed down Main Street one pleasant spring morning and saw Ben busy in front of his "Mammoth Clothing Emporium" located a few doors north of Allen's Corner. Ben was carefully adjusting a flashy seer-sucker suit of man's clothes over a wire frame which stood on the board walk in front of his show window.

"Morning, Tom," replied Ben, "how you like that suit, hey? Yust de latest tings ouet, an' only fourteen eighty-five. Dandy, ain't it?"

"Fine," says Tom, "purty as a speckled pup. How's business?"

"Rotten, rotten, yust fierce. Ain't sold only one suit today. Sold it, did I said? No, I yust given it away, for fifteen and ninety, an' I trowed in a pair off suspenders, too."

"That's good," said Tom. "Who'd you flimflam this time? That lanky caw puncher I seen down this way a coupla hours ago?"

"Mebby so," says Ben. "He said he yust come in offen range, an' vas goin' down to K. C."

"That's the suker I thought I seen," replied Tom, scratching an imaginary itch behind his left ear.

"D'you know, Ben, that was some of my money that feller was blowing in so reckless like. Got it offen me last night. Blowed in about chuck time. Said he'd rid up from the Rattlesnake and was goin' to take the varnished cars to the big town on the Missouri."

"An' how comes he vork Old Tom for some suckers, an' git your monies?"

"Work me—me? Nixey, Ben, not on your life. He was a-ridin' a nice pinto filly, and he wanted to turn it into cash, an' when I sized the critter up I took him on—give him—well, a good sized wad; and it made me hustle to scrape it up. But Old Tom knowed what he was doing. There's a circus headed this way in a coupla weeks, an' that hoss is just goin' to put me on easy street. Say, you ought to see her—a perfect spotted beauty—clean limb, stands over fourteen hands high, an' got the ginger, jist such a hoss as I heard you say you'd like to have. Am just goin' over to the barn an' see how she is sizin' up this mornin'. So long, Ben."

Tom ambled across the public square to the Zutavern & Bell livery barn, which stood on the corner now occupied by the county jail.

When he had taken his purchase of the night before over to the barn, the animal was a trim little cream colored filly, with a fine mane and tail, and withall a real good looker. But during that night Bill Zutavern, Ham Bell and G. W. Poole had got their heads to working. They held a conference in chambers with Tom Stone, and then called in A. S. Allen, the druggist, for some

expert advice, after which three or four mysterious figures with lanterns might have been seen meandering around the stall where the cream colored horse was located.

In the afternoon of the day when Tom had accosted Mr. Negbaur as above related, Tom watched from the front stoop of the Southern until he saw Ben fussing around in front of his store waiting for a chance to rope another customer. Then Tom went over to the livery barn, saddled up the pinto and leisurely cantered around the square. As he passed Negbaur's place he slowed up and called out:

"Hey, Ben, how you like her? Ain't she a beaut?"

And a beauty she was, a most unusual beauty. The cream colored filly had blossomed into a most attractive dapple, or spotted equine. Large patches of orange adorned her flanks and withers, less prominent flecks or dapples were scattered along her neck and breast.

Tom rode on down the street as Ben made as though he was coming out into the street for a closer feasting of his eyes upon the attractive animal. The rider was hailed with exclamations of wonder and admiration from the bystanders as he rode on down the street.

In the evening Tom again dropped in to chat with Ben. "Well, Ben, I done made a ten strike when I bought that pinto, didn't I? But I tell you I'm kinda up against it for ready cash—took all I could rake up to buy the nag. But then, when that circus gets here I'll make a killin', don't you forget."

Ben did not know about that. "Maybe that circus has got a'ready all the spotted horses what it wants, see? Maybe you don't get no seventy-five nor a hundred from them fellers."

"\$100 nothin'," says Tom. "If I don't pull down \$150 for that nag then I'll eat your old hat, Ben. But trouble is I've got to have some money right away, and it's quite a spell 'til that circus comes. Maybe I can sell her to some man here in town who wants a right nifty ridin' hoss. I wouldn't want quite so much rake off iffen I sold her to some good neighbor. But maybe I'll be able to hold her 'til circus day, an' git a good fat wad."

Ben yawned rather indifferently, jingled some loose change in his pockets, then remarked casually:

"Ain't got no summer suit yet, have you, Tom? I got one here what'll fit you easy, marked down from sixteen to fourteen ninety-eight, an' worth \$30, so hellup me. How much you give for that scrub of a horse?"

Tom evaded replying to the direct questions, put on a worried look, mumbled something under his breath, then brightened up, and said:

"Ben, you got lots of money, got the best clothing store in town, an' I don't mind doin' you a favor. You like that hoss. You know what a bargain is when you see it. You know the circus is coming and how quick they'll snap up such a beautiful circus hoss as that pinto. Tell you what I'll do: I'll take \$150 cash an' that suit (if it fits) an' the pinto is yourn."

"My golly, Tom, what you take me for? Mr. Rothschilds, not? You make me foolishness."

"But, Ben, the circus will give you that or more, and you'll be selling another suit you know, with the profit on it, an' all that. You wouldn't take advantage of an old neighbor like me, I know. Tell you what I'll do now, I'll cut it a quarter."

"A kvarter—what's twenty-five cents to me, huh?"

"Oh, I mean a quarter of the \$100. Make it \$125 cash and the suit—and you throw in a pair of them nice blue and white striped galluses."

"Vell, I tell you—this iss last vord—I give you one hunderd an' the suit—but trow in no suspenders—for the horse, yust cause you is a good friend, and hard up. Vat say?"

Tom deliberated awhile, then threw out one hand in a gesture of disgust; started to say no; then braced up, and with a sigh of resignation, agreed to the trade, and asked if Ben had the hundred dollars on him, so he could go and get the horse and bring it over.

Ben said he hadn't a hundred dollars handy, and the Brinkman bank was closed for the day, but he would give Tom \$2.50 to bind the trade, and Tom could bring the horse around in the morning, get his suit and \$97.50 and the deal would be closed.

But "the best laid plans of mice and men gang aft alee," for the next morning a newly employed "chambermaid" in the Zutavern & Bell stables was told to

curry and otherwise spruce up the spotted horse for delivery to Mr. Negbaur. That dusky knight of the scoop shovel and dung fork thought the pinto needed sponging down as well as currying up, and proceeded to use the sponge. Allen had not guaranteed fast colors, and the result was that the more Sambo sponged the more the spots spread and scattered, so that when Tom went to get the horse for delivery, he decided that Ben would hardly stand for the change. So he went over and offered to call the trade off and return the \$2.50. But Ben thought of the coming circus, of the neat profit he felt sure he would pull down, and declined to call off the trade.

Somehow the "great secret" got out, and eventually, after Zutavern, Poole, Bell and Allen had been called in to identify "the nigger in the woodpile" (not necessarily the "chambermaid in the livery stable") the trade was declared off, and the \$2.50 good faith money was spent in a place that Carrie Nation would have delighted in demolishing.

All but one, I think, of the actors in this incident of the pioneer days of Great Bend, have ceased their practical joking for all time.

Some Unwelcome Guests

"I wasn't taking any more risks; the way that lightning was capering around, it just put the fear of the Lord into my soul," exclaimed Narcene Graves, as he explained to Charlie Dodge why he threw a perfectly good sewing machine out of doors and into a deluge of rain.

It happened in 1872 as Mr. Dodge tells me. He was teaching his first school in Barton County, up where Albert now is, and boarded and roomed with Graves, the nearest house to the schoolhouse.

Graves' house was built of logs; was about 10x14 feet in size, divided into two rooms by stretching a rope from side to side, about four feet from the end, and on this rope hung several lengths of rag carpet. The smaller "room" thus partitioned off was Charlie's. His bed was two rough slabs, the sawed side up, one end resting on a window sill and the other end on a small trunk. A tick stuffed with grass, and a couple of blankets completed this sumptuous couch.

The other "room" was bed room, dining room, parlor and kitchen for Mr. and Mrs. Graves. The floor was the natural gumbo of the Walnut creek bottoms and the two windows—one in each compartment—were about two feet square. The roof of the building was made by first laying poles lengthwise of the building, then other shorter poles up and down to give pitch to the roof, this then being covered with long slough grass and dirt over

that. A very comfortable and commodious "dry weather" house.

The occasion of Mr. Graves' opening confession of the fear of God was one night when a heavy rain was falling, accompanied by almost constant flashes of lightning and heavy claps of thunder. The sewing machine, possibly the only one in Barton County at that time, having been brought by Mrs. Graves as her most precious treasure, in the prairie schooner, from an eastern state, stood at the head of their bed. During the storm, when the rain was pouring down through the dry weather roof, Charlie called out to them:

"Say, folks, I'd move that sewing machine away from the bed, if I was you. Steel, you know, will attract lightning."

Graves jumped out of bed, splashing with his bare feet into half a foot of water which covered the floor, and threw the machine out of doors, making the remarks previously quoted.

One day, later in the season, when the weather was warm, Charlie came from school to his boarding place, but found no house there. Graves had torn the house down, log by log, and had moved the logs a few hundred feet to a new location.

Asked by the teacher "what in thunder he was doing," Graves replied:

"I'm going to get away from them bed bugs. An' besides I think we can get a better view from this location."

That night they bunked under the stars, lulled to sleep by the hoot of the owls and the distant yell of coyotes. The next day Graves rebuilt his house and for a while they were not so greatly bug-ridden, and those unwelcome visitors were eliminated.

During that same spring Graves was putting in his spare time—of which he had not much else but—dragging drift wood out of the creek and piling it up on higher ground, against the winter needs. He tied one end of a long clothes line to his ax and the other end around his waist. Then he would throw his ax into the stream, across a floating log, and pull it to the shore.

Charlie was an interested onlooker, and was just remarking “watch out you don’t get hold of too big a fish,” when Graves lassooed a big piece of drift that about that time took a notion to whirl around in the current, and—splash—he was drawn into the creek, over the high bank. He landed on his feet, but with the water up to his armpits. The log moved on, and was slowly drawing him into deeper water, when Charlie lay flat on his stomach on the bank, and with a long stick was able to push it out to where Graves could grab the other end of it. He warned Graves that if he (Charlie) felt himself slipping he would let go the pole. But he did not slip, and eventually, Graves was pulled to the shore.

One more incident of that year of school: The school house was also a log house—built by Charlie Roudebush—with cracks between the logs, where the chinking had fallen out, and holes in the thatched roof larger than

your fist. One day, during school hours, the children set up a cry:

"O, teacher, teacher, look there," and pointed up to the middle of the ceiling.

There, protruding down through the roof, was the head and about two feet of the largest bull snake the teacher had ever seen. It squirmed on through, and dropped to the middle of the school room floor, while the children scrambled to the side walls and bunched around the teacher. Charlie killed the snake with a shovel. He thinks it measured over five feet long, and was about four inches around the largest part. It was indeed a dangerous and ugly looking brute, black and yellow spotted. So another unwelcomed visitor was disposed of.

Charlie says the children when out at play would often come running to him and call attention to a lone buffalo they had discovered wandering about in the distance. It would probably be a weak cow, or calf, that could not keep up with the herds then moving west to the open country where the white settlers had not yet come to take possession of the long undisputed grazing grounds.

Mart Brining, of this city, and Henry Brining, of Ellinwood, were young men at that time in that neighborhood; and the young Brining children attended Mr. Dodge's school. Charlie often rode to town with the elder Mr. Brining in his lumber wagon, for the "week end."

Three Legs and Three Arms

Kansas is known as the Soldier State. When admitted to the Union, the question of whether she should come in as a slave state or a free state was one of the questions which brought out some bitter discussions in Congress. Bordered on the east by Missouri, and south of her Texas, states where human slavery was practiced, the people of those states were bitter against the admission of Kansas as a free state.

But the cause of freedom prevailed in the end, and when the Southern states seceded from the Union and all men whose hearts were loyal to the stars and stripes were called upon to take up arms in defense of our flag, Kansas sent more men than any other state in the Union in proportion to population.

When that bloody warfare was over and human slavery was a thing of the past, never to be revived again in this fair land, the loyal men who offered their lives for the preservation of the Union, many of them being maimed for life, were naturally drawn to Kansas, where they hoped to again return to industrial pursuits. It is of two such soldiers I shall write about in this episode.

Ira D. Brougher lost an arm in the service. It was taken off at the shoulder. Frank Dell lost a leg, amputated just below the knee. Neither of them procured an artificial limb, though Frank had a peg leg strapped to his stub.

They came to Kansas in the late seventies and each filed on a claim in Barton County, south of the Arkansas River, their claims joining each other. They held those claims the proper time required by the preemption law and then proved up on them.

Imagine, you young farmers of today, who farm with power tractors and all kinds of riding machinery, who jump into your auto at the close of your day's work and come to town to attend picture shows, the lodges, dances and other places of amusement and entertainment, imagine those two crippled soldier boys going out upon the bleak and open prairie where neighbors were few and far between, where the only night entertainment they had was to listen to the howl of the prowling coyotes, the rumble and thunder of stampeding herds of long-horn cattle or the wailing screech of the nighthawk, owl, or whippoorwill, and there settling down to win themselves homes. Think of those two young men turning the virgin soil with an ox team, scattering by hand their seeds for crops, harvesting their grain in the crude methods of the day and marketing their products in slow moving wagons drawn by oxen or a span of slim limbed range horses.

But they did it, they stuck to it, and won out, in spite of the handicap of physical drawbacks. Two ambitious young men with three legs and three arms.

Ira and Frank were chummy, and never became discouraged. They helped each other in the more difficult emergencies. They put down one well to provide water for the two, and they dug it themselves with a

fire shovel, a rope and bucket and a hatchet. Ira, with one arm but two good legs, climbed down and did the digging; while Frank, with two good arms but only one leg, hauled the dirt to the surface with the rope and bucket. Fortunately they did not have to dig very far to reach water.

Ira could do the harrowing better than Frank. Frank could handle the big sod plow better with his two good arms, while Ira wielded the whip and "geehawed" the oxen.

When it came to horseback riding there was a never settled dispute—but a friendly one—between them as to which could mount a horse the quicker and handle him the more expertly. If the cayuse was a gentle one and stood still Frank had the advantage, for he could steady himself on his peg leg and had two hands—one for the reins and one for the saddle horn—and could put his foot in the stirrup and yank himself aboard in a jiffy. But if the animal was one of those temperamental shave-tails that danced around and was always "rarin' to go," Ira had the advantage of two good feet with which he could waltz around and watch his chances to jump into the saddle. In turning flapjacks or winding the coffee mill they both were experts, while one was as good as the other in providing meat, bringing down a prairie chicken, duck or goose with the old shotgun which they shared as common property.

Both of these energetic soldier boys have answered the last roll call. But the memory of their early struggles will linger with all of us who knew them in pleasing and

deserved recognition of their sterling worth and manly attributes.

After proving up on their claims, they both came to Great Bend to make their homes. Frank Dell married and reared a family, but Ira Brougher remained a bachelor. Frank conducted a saloon for awhile, then a barber shop. Ira was elected as a county official and for many years served our people well and satisfactorily. He served as Representative of the County in the State Legislature, and was at one time State Commander of the Kansas Grand Army of the Republic. The fine bronze monument which adorns the north side of the court yard park was erected by Mr. Brougher in memory of his comrades who wore the blue and gave their lives for the honor of our country.

The inspiring beat of marching feet
Or wondrous thrill of fife and drum,
No more disturbs their rest so sweet
With warning of conflict to come.
The weird call of prowling wild,
When nights are dark or the stars are bright,
No longer breaks their silent night,
Nor fills them with forebodings mild.
No more the cooing of the doves,
Nor meadow lark's inviting call
Will waken them at morning's dawn
To the energies their thoughts enthrall.
They sleep in peace, their troubles o'er,
And on that bronze of lasting worth
Their names inscribed in loving lore
Proclaims for them all peace on earth.



What to Do Next

In the life of every person there comes a time, or perhaps numerous times, when he or she is called upon, without warning or premonition to decide in a crucial moment, what to do next. The incidents I shall mention are not written for personal exploitation, but as a record of some of the things the Volunteer Fire Department of our city has been up against in years gone by; and to warn the boys who succeeded the writer in that work that they do not know what is going to happen to them, or when the time may come when they will be called upon in a ticklish situation to decide in a moment what next move to make.

One time we were called to a fire which had broken out in a two story brick building on the corner where the Postoffice now stands. It was occupied by a hardware store, and the fire was in the north end of the upper story. A one story shed roof building was on the north side, the roof slanting up to the second story windows. When we got the fire hose there, Walt Cornell and myself being nozzle men, mounted the shed roof with the hose. It was freezing cold weather, and the roof was covered with ice, and the thin stream of water that at first trickled out, from the stand pipe pressure, froze on the roof and made it doubly slick. When we had worked our way up almost to the window, to shove in the nozzle and reach the fire, Jim Pritchard, the engineer at the pumping plant, got direct pressure from the pumps onto the mains—and then the fun began for the nozzlemen. We were threshed about on that ice roof like a terrier shaking a rat; could not stay on our feet; could only stay on the roof by flopping down onto the hose with our bodies. While lying thus expecting every moment to be thrown off the roof, to fall fully sixteen feet to the sidewalk below, Walt said:

“H—I, Will, what’ll we do next?”

Needless to say we got help from the rest of the boys in time—and put out the fire.

Along about that time another fire broke out in great piles of barn refuse that had been dumped on the prairie north of Broadway.

With a strong wind from the north carrying the

blazing loose rubbish before it, fires were starting in numerous places all over the east part of town. At the Dave Heizer place there was a truck of oil standing in the back yard, and we knew if that got on fire many homes would suffer destruction. We attached the hose at the Diffenbacher corner, and started across the block with the nozzle end. I cannot recall all who were with me in that effort, but remember that Bob Ewalt was one of them. The smoke became so dense that we had to drop to the ground and crawl and drag the hose several hundred feet—stopping every few moments to put our faces close to the ground to get fresh air. Fires started in numerous places—probably a dozen—between Broadway and the Ed McNown home. Boys, that was the greatest lung tester I ever went up against.

Another close call: In company with eight or ten of the boys we were running to a fire at the Hulme mill, on South Williams street, pulling the big two wheeled hose cart, which when loaded with fire hose weighed near a ton, when I stumbled and fell right in front of the wheel and only rolled out of the way and by the fraction of a second escaped being run over.

At another time I was sent up a ladder in the old Opera house building to break an opening through a window. From the top of the ladder I could reach the window with an ax. As I looked up and struck with the ax a good sized piece of glass fell outward and coming down hit me just above the eye. I carried the scar for many years, but am glad I still carry the eye unimpaired.

The uninitiated mayhap will wonder why young men volunteer to take these chances? But most of the men who have done so have no regrets to offer, especially after they have belonged to the department long enough to learn of the brotherly feeling, the comradeship of "service" that is engendered by the occasional calls to duty and the monthly meetings held, where goodfellowship is supreme.

Friendship Renewed

The friendships of our youth are generally the friendships most cherished in our declining years; as the habits of youth are the habits which have the greatest governing power over our later lives. The story here written is the story of the strange reunion of two men well known and respected by all the earlier settlers of our county.

After the close of the Civil War, Edward J. Dodge returned to his home in Port Washington, Wis., then a small frontier town on the western shore of Lake Michigan, in Ozaukee County. There he opened a blacksmith shop. At that time G. F. Mecklem was also a resident of Port Washington, running a hotel; he was also a deputy sheriff of his county. Mr. Mecklem was a large, well-built man, and was first and foremost in all public activities of the town; first to lead relief parties when some fishing smack or other sailing craft was wrecked upon the rocky shores; leader in the pursuit of evildoers, and ever ready and willing to lend a helping hand to succor and relieve.

After the mother of his children was taken by death, Mr. Mecklem sold out his business and left Port Washington, and it was about six years before Mr. Dodge knew what had become of him. Before Mr. Mecklem left, he and Mr. Dodge had a settlement of accounts. Some trivial item came up in dispute, and both men believing they were right, neither would acknowledge himself in the wrong. And so, these two men who had

lived together as most congenial neighbors, who had shared together the dangers and trials of pioneer life, became estranged, and parted "at outs" with each other.

Then Mr. Dodge got the Kansas fever, a desire to seek new adventure and find a home for himself and family away from the uncertainties of life along the storm beaten shores of the great lake, and he came to Kansas, arriving at Russell, over the Union Pacific in 1871. He heard people tell of the wonderful Arkansas Valley to the south of Russell which was then being thrown open to settlement.

One morning he started out on foot to walk across and see this valley. He came to Walnut Creek about at the point where now the waters of the Walnut are being pumped out and diverted to the great Missouri Pacific reservoir. After lying awhile on the soft buffalo grass and resting his limbs, he concluded to meander up the creek and view the country, intending eventually to go on down the valley and spend the night at Fort Zarah, which stood near where the Santa Fe railroad now crosses the Walnut.

As he walked up the valley to a point where the town of Heizer now is, he heard someone chopping in the timber. On approaching, he found a boy of about seventeen years chopping wood. The boy told him to go on up to the house, about half a mile, where his dad was. As he approached the house, a half dugout and half log structure, roofed with sod, he saw another husky lad turning a windlass and hauling up a dirt bucket from

a well where someone was digging below. As he came closer he heard the man down in the well say:

"I say, it's about time to kick off now, and eat."

Mr. Dodge thought he recognized the voice, and the "I say" sounded wonderfully familiar. And when the broad shoulders of the man appeared as he climbed out of the well, they were also recognized as the shoulders of G. F. Mecklem, his one-time friend of six years ago, the Port Washington deputy sheriff and hotel man.

Mr. Mecklem just for a moment glanced at the stranger, apparently not recognizing him, but seeing a stranger said:

"I say, come on up to the house, I guess grub's ready."

Mr. Dodge followed Mecklem and the boy into the house, where others of the children had the meal prepared, and without a word being said, they sat down and ate. Dodge decided in his mind that if Mecklem still entertained a grudge about that little dispute, over accounts way back there in Wisconsin, why then, dang it, he could keep his grudge—he, Dodge, wouldn't speak first in recognition.

At the end of the meal, Mecklem arose, went to a shelf on the wall and got his package of tobacco, filled and lighted his pipe, and then turned around, put out his hand and said:

"I say, Ed Dodge, durn you, how are you? I'm mighty glad to see you."

I can imagine the warm blood of friendship that welled from the hearts of these two old comrades and went coursing through their veins as they forgot forever the old-time differences which parted them in anger. I can imagine the stories they had to tell of their families and themselves; of their lives and their ambitions, their hopes and their plans for the future in this glorious new land of promise.

Mr. Dodge did not go to Fort Zarah to spend the night. Long they sat in the coming twilight and renewed old friendships so dear to the hearts of us all; and especially sweet to those two grown men of family who had parted in anger to seek their different ways, to be once more united as by a miracle worked by an unseen hand for the betterment of both.

The souls of both these men have gone a venturing into the unseen promised land unknown of mortals, the soul of Mr. Dodge departing in the peace and quiet of his home, and that of Mr. Mecklem being summoned, quickly and unwarned, in the whirling disaster of a devastating storm. But their children, and their children's children can still cherish the memory of that broadminded and warm-hearted glow of reconciliation and renewed friendship which came over them all at once in the hazy dusk of that summer afternoon of long ago.

Bill Was a Sportsman

The Cheyenne Bottoms, that almost level stretch of land, in extent some thirteen miles long and six miles wide, surrounded as it is on all sides by fertile rolling hills and uplands, and absorbing the flood waters of two fair sized creeks—Blood Creek and Deception Creek—and numerous smaller streams which wander down between the surrounding hills lying between Great Bend and Hoisington, has lately been more prominently in the public eye than usual.

Duck hunters in season have always considered it an ideal hunting ground. It was for a number of years the scene of the annual meetings of the American Coursing Association. It has been overrun with scientists and geologists, and numerous experimental holes (and many thousands of dollars) have been sunk in its bosom to the depth of thousands of feet in an effort to locate a supposed hidden wealth of oil. And just recently a committee of state officials have visited and examined it as to its possibilities as a state storage basin for fish and game preserve.

From the time when the earliest settlers of Kansas hunted the buffalo which grazed in great herds on the prairies surrounding the Cheyenne Bottoms and sought its water holes in times of dry weather, men have speculated upon what that great level stretch of land was good for.

In the eighties Edward Uhl, of Kansas City, Mis-

souri, and W. W. Carney, of Leavenworth, Kansas, decided it would make an ideal cattle ranch. They secured ownership of numerous sections of the land; built a wire fence around their land (including some land in which the title was still in the government) and stocked it with cattle. It was then—a great part of it—known as the Uhl and Carney ranch. I do not remember how many years it was used as a cattle ranch, or just why it was eventually abandoned as such. Mr. Uhl visited it only occasionally, but Mr. Carney came and remained permanently, making Great Bend his headquarters and driving to and from the ranch with a span of good prairie travelers and a buckboard. There were not many roads to follow, and by angling across the prairies the Bottoms could be reached in fewer miles than are required now to reach them.

Will Carney (Bill, we soon learned to call him) was a jolly, sociable man, liked by all who knew him. His younger brother, Charley Carney, came out later and made his home here. They were both considered as "good Indians." By that I mean, they were not "stuck up" or "dudish," and adapted themselves to the ways of the times.

While talking with Frank Kramer the other day, he recalled an incident I had almost forgotten, although I enjoyed it hugely at the time it occurred—in 1888 or 1889.

Bill Carney was a true sport, and he was right at home among the migratory wild geese and ducks, cranes, brants and shitepokes which flapped their innumerable

wings over the Bottoms, or with the prairie chickens and quail which scooted over the hills and valleys; he knew a badger from a prairie dog, or a jack rabbit from a cottontail, and was mighty handy with a rifle or a shot gun. He had relatives in Leavenworth whose business was conducting one of the largest sporting goods and outfitting establishments in the west.

Bill wrote to his brothers to secure for and ship to him the best hunting dog they could find. He wanted no "measly mongrel, but the very best full blooded, pedigreed purp." In due time they wrote him they had secured what he wanted, but it took some "spondulix" to get it; and they would express it to him as he had instructed, in care of the A. R. Moss grocery store, Great Bend. They sent the pedigree of the animal along, and Bill took pardonable pride in showing the signed and sealed official document to his many friends.

I do not remember what kind of a dog it was—a water spaniel, pointer, setter, dachshund or greyhound. In due time, Tom Moore, the drayman, who was also express messenger, brought it, carefully crated, to the Moss grocery where Bill had instructed them to care for it and notify him when it arrived.

The night the dog arrived, Henry Moss and Cal Crilley got busy. Cal hunted all over town until he got the most woe-be-gone, mangy and dirty specimen of scrub dog he could find, brought him to the Moss store and taking out of the crate the pedigreed hunter, put in its stead the nondescript denizen of the back alleys, and placed it in the back end of the store. The imported dog

they hid in the cellar. Then they sent word to Carney that his dog had arrived, they had paid the express charges and of course would take good care of him.

Bill came into town as soon as he could after getting the word. He put his team up at Bill Zutavern's stable, and said to the liveryman:

"That dog I was telling you about arrived—he's over at Al Moss' store. Come over and take a squint at the real thing in dog flesh."

To which Zutavern replied, "All hunkadory," and accompanied Carney.

Coming across the square they stopped at the court house to broadcast the news, and Al Schermerhorn, Dave Heizer and several others joined the gang to see the new dog. At Allen's drug store the crowd was added to, and there was quite a mob of interested friends when they entered the Moss store.

When shown the mongrel in the crate, Carney's face went blank for a moment. But not for long. A broad smile soon spread over his face and chased away the cloud of gloom, and with sparkling eyes he remarked:

"There he is, boys; ain't he the cheese, the real thing? I showed you his pedigree, didn't I? Now you all come out with me and I'll give him a try-out—show you what blue blood will do."

Not a hint that he suspected some shenanigan, either by his folks back in Leavenworth, or some one else.

And the joke the boys thought to play on him lost much of its anticipated flavor when Bill thus exhibited

his perfect satisfaction with his consignment of dog flesh. And it was made quite a question of debate among his friends as to whom the joke—and the drinks—was on, Bill Carney, or Henry Moss and Cal Crilley.

You remember I stated that Will Carney was a “true sport?”

Two Foxy Grandmas

No matter how prim and sedate your conversation may be; no matter how decorous and concise your every act, nor how faithfully you confine your daily life to the properly accepted amenities of society, there has been a time, sometime in your early life, when you have thrown off all restraints, cut loose from precedents of propriety and turned yourself loose for a real, honest-to-goodness "lark." And so long as your heart was pure, your conscience clear, and no one was harmed by your exuberant pranks, this world for you was made better by reason of such enjoyment.

Believing this, I shall relate an incident in the early lives of two Grandmothers, now residents of this city. Grandma Ora and Grandma Ella are cousins, and of about the same age. When they were girls in their 'teens, Grandma Ora removed with her parents from their Iowa home to make a new home in Kansas, arriving in Great Bend in 1874, and locating on railroad land about three miles west of town. Then in 1877 Grandma Ella also came out with her parents, who located in town, and the two girls joyfully celebrated their reunion after a few years of separation. While one lived in the country and the other in town, they were still close enough together to be chummy, and few days passed that they did not see each other. The farm on which Ora lived was known as Uncle Jake's farm, which he conducted with

the assistance of Aunt Lizzie and their three daughters, Ora being the oldest of the three. They had no boys.

One day in 1878 Grandma Ella went out to spend the day at Uncle Jake's. The girls on the farm were all good horsewomen—"cow girls" they were not averse to being called—and there was abundant outdoor sport. This day the inveterate chums decided to go on a lark. Grandma Ora was a decided brunette, with raven locks and expressive brown eyes; Grandma Ella was a decided blonde—"tow-head" as her brother Bill discourteously called her. They dug up out of the somewhere Uncle Jake's other pants and a pair of overalls, a couple of shirts, two pairs of old boots and a couple of western hats of a rakish contour. Toggled up in these, with red bandana handkerchiefs about their necks and some sort of improvised belts to hold up their pants—trousers, I mean—they slipped out of the house, and going to the corrals, or feed lots, where Uncle Jake was gathering the cattle, asked him for a job as herders.

Uncle Jake was a true sport, and entered into the game with zest. He soberly asked them where they had been riding herd; why they quit their jobs; if they could rope a critter proper, and could handle a branding iron; if they could break a bucking bronco, and so on. Then he told them they would have to go to the house with him while he talked to his wife about whether or not they could take on a couple more hands, where they could sleep them and what wages they could pay, etc.

Arriving at the house, he went in first and told Aunt Lizzie about the two boys who wanted work. She flew

off the handle, as it were, and said they did not need any more help, and she did not propose to take on any more tramps.

But when she got a good look at the lads, why then handle and everything else went into the air with her hands, as she exclaimed:

“For the lands sakes. You girls. Get them old clothes right off you this minute. For the land sakes.”

And Uncle Jake roared with laughter until the tears ran down his cheeks.

The young “cowboys” then made the rounds of the closest neighbors, applying for work with the most comic results as the neighbors were first “taken in” and then disillusioned.

The lark was not complete until the girls were piled into a lumber wagon and brought to town by Uncle Jake, to the home of Grandma Ella. Aunt Lizzie protested vigorously against their going into town “rigged up in that outlandish way;” but Uncle Jake coaxed her off, and into town they went. But they came in the alley way, and up the back stairs.

There were two young men of the town whom I think also expressed themselves as “scandalized” by such actions, but who evidently got over it, as in succeeding years they made it possible for Ora and Ella to have the honorable title of “Grandma” affixed to their names.

I imagine thoughts something like the following are going through the minds of some of the numerous grand-

children of those two Foxy Grandmas, after reading the above account of this early day incident.

WHEN GRANDMA WORE THE PANTS

I'd like to been there, a little bird, a-teeterin' on a limb;
Er wallerin' in the dusty road, er takin' of a swim;
Er peekin' about fer bugs and worms er little crawlin' ants,
When Grandma up and did that stunt—a-wearin' of the pants.

I'd like to a-seen her swaggerin' round, a-hitchin' up her clothes,
A-straddlin' of that bronc, and then a-blowin' of her nose
In that big red bandana; while a-lookin' all askance
To see if any feller peeked—while she was wearin' pants.

I'd like to a-been a little mouse, a-crawlin' 'long so sly,
Then jumpin' out right in front of her, an' catchin' of her eye,
An' heered her scream an' holler, an' run all kinds of slants—
When Grandma dressed up like a boy, an' was wearin' of the pants.



Tom Stone's Nut Cracker

Many amusing stories are told of the eccentricities of Colonel Tom Stone, first a cowboy, then a butcher, and for several years proprietor of the Southern Hotel, a frame structure, which was the first two-story building erected in Great Bend, in the early seventies. It stood on what is now the Farmers Bank corner. I do not know where he got the "Colonel," but he looked the part all right. He was a six-footer, rather on the rawboned order of build, with a penetrating eye, a rather deep voice, and a smile which appeared as if he were constantly trying to suppress it.

One day, among the guests of the Southern was a rather dudish looking man, with hair parted in the middle, and who bore all the appearance of being just from the effete East. Tom was a typical host and set up a good wholesome meal, and sometimes fruits and nuts "to top off with," as he said. This day it was English walnuts, an ample supply in a big tureen which sat in the middle of the dining table where any who wished could help themselves to all they liked. Most of the guests would take their pocket knives and split the shells open easily. Apparently Mr. Dude was not onto the trick, for he called a waitress and told her he would like "a nut cracker."

The girl was stumped; she went to Tom and told him "that tenderfoot wants a nut cracker."

"All right, I'll git 'im one," says Tom. Directly he returned with a large sandstone rock as big as his head in one hand, and in the other hand a hammer. Going to where the "tenderfoot" sat, he slapped the stone down on one side of the man's plate and the hammer on the other side, and said: "There's your nut cracker," then stepped around the table so he faced the guest who, when he saw the assumed fierceness of expression on the face of his host, meekly began a manipulation of those frontier dining table accessories.

In the butcher shop his costume was simple but suggestive. He generally wore a colored wool shirt; sleeves rolled up above the elbows, and his forearms bespattered with the marks of his trade; pants in high topped and high heeled boots, and a broad brimmed hat

on the back of his head. He was not fluent of language, but spoke always to the point.

A lady customer one day made an objection to "so much bone in your meat now-a-days, Mister Stone." Tom sliced every bit of bone out of the cut he had already sliced for her, and weighed it, and said:

"Thar now, Misses Blank, reckon that's bettah. Fact is, I'm goin' to try crossin' these long-horns with a rubber ball, an' see if we kaint git mo' boneless beef."

When business was dull in the shop he would stroll down the street and visit with neighboring merchants. Sometimes, if he happened to meet an unusual number of congenial spirits, and "tanked up" rather freely, he would take on the duty of policing the two blocks along the west side of the public square, which was then practically the entire business district. A board sidewalk about six feet wide ran the length of the two blocks. Sometimes there would be dry goods boxes and packing cases, barrels, kegs and other impedimenta on the side walks in front of the stores and saloons. Tom would proceed to kick or roll every obstruction from the walk into the middle of the street, without protest from anyone, laughingly remarking as he kicked:

"You all want to keep this here sidewalk cleaned up fo' the ladies who may pass this way."

Tom, with some others, had secured a seine, gone down to the Walnut one spring day, and brought back a wagonload of fish. As the wagon stood in front of the hotel a young man who had been badly crippled from

infancy in such a manner that his lower limbs were almost useless, and who had come from the lake region of Wisconsin, thought to look at the fish and see how Kansas fish compared with those he had seen taken from Lake Superior. He (I will call him Charlie) could not see into the wagon, so he put his hands on top of the box to pull himself up with his arms. Tom Stone had watched Charlie from the door of the hotel. He came out, took Charlie by the seat of his pants with one hand and by the back of his coat collar with the other hand and bodily lifted him up so he could see into the wagon box, saying:

“Ain’t them beauties?”

Then he carefully set Charlie on his feet, got a forked stick, and stringing onto it a fish about a foot and a half long, remarked:

“Yo’re a stranger to me, young fella, but take that fish along an’ have you’ mammy fry it.”

Kansas Sets the Pace

There are times, during the mature years of a life spent in mental and physical activities, when we wonder if it was all worth while. We begin to check up on our earlier visions and predictions of our youth, when the blood was less sluggish in our veins, and when our days were filled not only with the enjoyment of pursuit and the satisfaction of accomplishment, but with visions of the future that had no taint of pessimism nor doubt of ultimate fruition.

The youth of today, while surrounded with vastly greater opportunities for advancement, both mental and material, should be glad indeed that their time is so filled with opportunity.

While looking over the files of newspapers printed in Great Bend by the writer hereof during the years from 1876 to 1915, I ran across many editorials and local comments which not only recalled to mind the spirit of optimism which controlled the men and women of those days, but renewed my faith in the belief that we should continue to look for the coming of a still brighter future and prepare to take advantage of the many good things developing for us from day to day.

Kansas has ever been in the lead, in the vanguard of progress. She has been called "the hotbed of cranks," the "fountain head of fads" and the breeding place of ideas contrary to the laws of precedent or the tenets of conservatism so long guiding the actions of the older

states of the Union. But notwithstanding all the criticisms heaped upon her by her neighbors, Kansas has gone ahead, independent of criticism or ridicule, and forced upon the world a recognition of her value, and the importance of her record as a pacemaker.

For instance: Ridicule and anathema were heaped upon the Kansas "saint," John P. St. John, and Mother Carrie Nation was pictured as the latest crazy product of the state. But today we have nationwide prohibition by consent of a vast majority of all the people.

"Whiskers" Pfeffer, "Sockless" Jerry Simpson and "Howling" Molly Lease held not only the "middle of the road" but the middle of the vaudeville stage of the "effete East" during the Populist days. And yet, most of the reforms in legislation which those people advocated have been put into our national statutes and the entire country is bettered thereby.

And the actions, the physical makeup and verbal expressions of the Kansas pioneers were described in the eastern press as an unending source of ridicule and amusement.

Here are some reproductions of items or comments from the early day papers, from 1876 until the beginning of the present century:

There is work for us to do,
While the years are rolling on;
There is wealth in plenty too,
While the years are rolling on.
As our journey we pursue let us buy a lot or two,
For our boom will push right through,
While the years are rolling on.

Those of our readers who "bought a lot or two" or a farm or two in those days, and held onto them, will appreciate the above parody on an old familiar song, "While the Years are Rolling On."

The following clipping was from the New York Tribune, issue of May 10, 1887:

"A traveler in Kansas, crossing a prairie the other day, came upon a man with a plow, who seemed to be preparing the land for agricultural purposes.

"'My friend,' said the traveler, addressing the long-whiskered man in high top boots, shirt sleeves and a broad brimmed hat, 'ain't you laying off them corn rows quite a distance apart?'

"'Corn rows? How come?'

"'Yes, those rows over there on the prairie.'

"'Gosh-all-hemlocks, stranger,' exclaimed the Kansas man, as he spat at a prairie dog hole a couple of yards away and scored a bull's eye, 'Is it possible you hain't hearn of it yit?'

"'Heard of what?' asked the traveler.

"'Why, this here boom. Man alive, where you been? Them ain't corn rows over there. They's streets an' alleys, an' this here's a city. You are right now a-straddlin' the corner uv Commercial Street and Emporium Avenue where we aim to build the hotel with forty rooms. No, sir, this here ain't no corn patch, not by a durn sight.'"

And the young boys of the long ago were not much

differently constituted from the boys of today. Here is one of them:

“The Sterling Bulletin (of May 14, 1892) says: A farmer a few miles east of town sent his boy, aged eight, out to plow a small field. Along about noon he concluded to go out and see how the boy was getting along, thinking the patch should be about finished. He found the lad sitting on the plow beam perfectly contented. He asked the lad how he was progressing with the work. The boy said:

“ ‘Splendid. I’ve plowed three whole rounds; caught two butterflies—one of them a beauty—killed a snake and skun him, and found a prairie dog hole.’ ”

From the Democrat of April 23, 1893:

“The wind has been ‘harnessed’ in many parts of Barton County and is proving a faithful servant, on the job almost constantly, in filling stock tanks and reservoirs. And the wind not broken to ‘harness’ sometimes does a good turn also—if the story told by ‘Give-a-dam’ Jones who lives up in the hilly part of the county, near Verbeck—is vouched for with the proper papers. And that name, ‘Give-a-dam,’ was not his real name, but was given him by his neighbors in the north part of the county because of his persistent use of the expression in his general conversation on any subject. Mr. Jones says:

“ ‘You know one of them little twisters we had last week up in our part of the county done me a good turn. I jist had time to plow a couple of rounds ’fore unhitchin’ for the day, an’ left the plow stickin’ in the ground—a

little level patch betwixt some hills. An' in the morning—give-a-dam—one o' them little hell-roarin' twisters didn't do a thing but grab that old plow an' spun it 'round an' 'round, 'til the hull give-a-dam land I'd laid out was plowed up slick as if I'd done it myself. I don't give-a-dam if it'd turn over another patch.' ”

While the pioneers were responsible for many of the stories of those times, which stories bordered on the ridiculous and improbable, they were also responsible for the things that were done to establish an undying record of pluck and determination, without which our state would never have gained the proud position she now holds.

An Old Mystery Solved

In 1875 or 1876—I am not sure of the date—our first school house of any size was built in Great Bend, on the ground now occupied by the public library. It was a two story frame building with steep roof and four gables pointing to or facing the four cardinal points. In the center on the top was a belfry in which hung the bell whose more or less unwelcome tones called the youth of the town to their studies of the three R's—"Readin', 'Ritin' and 'Rithmetic." Doubtless many who read this learned there the first mysteries of the alphabet and the multiplication tables, and became adept in the art of decorating the ceilings and walls with chewed paper wads.

When L. E. Hubbard—Gene, we all called him—now a prominent jeweler and financier of Salt Lake City, Utah, was here recently, one of the first old landmarks he sought to locate was that old frame school house.

He recalled an incident which clings to his memory more tenaciously than any other, and in recalling it he disclosed, for the first time in 49 years, the secret of a most mysterious happening of the early days.

One night, near the hour of midnight, the residents of the town were startled by the mysterious tolling of the school house bell.

"Ding-a-d-o-n-g," a pause, "ding d-o-n-g" it kept ringing out on the silent night. People all over town

were awakened. They listened in awe to the solemn tolling and wondered at the meaning thereof. Men dressed hurriedly and procuring lanterns sought the scene of the tolling. The janitor hurried to the building. It was securely locked, and no one was found around or inside it. Still the solemn tolling continued. Men went up into the attic, or belfry, with lanterns to try to solve the mystery. There was little wind blowing, and the building was not swaying. But the tolling continued until they went up into the belfry when it stopped. But after they had searched in vain for the unseen hand that tolled the bell and had returned to the people awaiting below, the tolling again commenced—"ding-d-o-n-g" the mournful sound wailed out.

The thing was a "nine days wonder." All sorts of speculation was indulged in, as to the cause of the mysterious ringing. Was it a warning of the occult sciences of some impending danger? Had there been earth tremors that effected the swinging bell? The early day spiritualists had their theory, of course. Any human agency seemed to have been eliminated by the thorough search of the men with the lanterns.

But that nineteenth century mystery has at last been solved. Gene Hubbard let the cat out of the bag, and he did not tell me not to enlighten the public.

Eugene and Charlie Ward, who afterwards married Hubbard's sister, Aletha, and is now a millionaire land holder in Florida, were schoolmates, and they two conceived and perpetrated the unusual demonstration.

During one noon hour at school they slipped up into the belfry with a large ball of fine but strong twine and a bit of fine black wire. They attached the wire to the bell clapper, tied the string to the wire, then loosened one end of a slat enclosing the belfry and pushed out the ball of twine, which rolled to the ground where one of them was waiting to conceal it. The string was not noticed in the afternoon.

That night they got the ball and stretched the string across the street south, and to a "cache" they had in a pile of lumber back of the Methodist church on Williams Street. Then at the proper hour for the spirits to move they slipped out of their homes and to their den in the lumber pile and began the "ding-d-o-n-g" business. From their den they could see the school house, and when they saw the lantern light in the belfry they ceased tolling until the men went down, then commenced it again. In the flickering lantern light the black wire attached to the bell clapper was not discovered, and it being high above the heads of the investigators they did not run into it.

If those two foxy young schemers never told any of their schoolmates of the trick, it was an evidence of the judicious team work and close lipped conservatism which in later years has enabled them to climb to affluence and independence.

A Badger Fight

I have written of the feathered tribe which abounded, from the seventies to the nineties, on our vast prairies and along the Arkansas River and the smaller streams tributary thereto, and described at least one favored early day method of capturing the same. Some description of the wild animal life to be found here in those days may be interesting.

There were prairie dogs, jack rabbits, cotton tails, skunks, raccoons, opossums, bob cats, coyotes, an occasional grey wolf and a scattering of antelope. The buffalo had practically passed out in the early seventies. But there was another animal which burrowed in the prairies and the hillsides, and got more attention from the town sportsmen than all the other animals combined—the badger. Even in these twentieth century days an occasional live badger is seen.

This animal is a fighting scamp. In full growth the badger in size is about half way between a bob cat and a coyote; has a broad, flat body, short legs and jaws like a steel trap. When dug or dragged out of his hole he will put up a winning fight against 'most any kind of a dog, and will often hold a whole pack of dogs at bay for hours, so that a badger fight was classed as among the best sports of the day, and the boys in town always arranged to have a fierce badger in captivity, so that any newcomer with sportsmanlike intentions could be accommodated 'most any time.

The badger was generally kept at Bill Zutavern's livery stable, or in the rear of Henry Moss' store, or down by Heiko Feldkamp's bakery, where the crowd had to go to see the fight pulled off. The local sports would generally divide on picking the winner, some placing their bets on the badger and some on the dog—which was generally a big and scrappy looking bull dog. After all the preliminaries were arranged—the dog under leash by his master, the badger in an overturned wash tub or box, the question came up:

“Who would pull the badger out from under the box and let the dog go at him?”

Some backers of the dog would offer to pull him out, as would also some who were backing the badger, both sides jockeying to get some supposed advantage for his animal.

Finally a compromise would be reached, and all would agree that the stranger, or visiting sport, should turn the badger loose and let the dog at him.

So all would be set, a ring formed of from ten to a hundred or more men standing a safe distance from the center to avoid casualties, the man told to pull him out quickly at the word “go,” then jump back out of the danger zone, while some other man was placed to yank the box or tub out of the way.

At the word “go” the puller would generally give a husky yank, and out from under the box would come—what in those days we called a “thundermug”—you know what I mean; one of those things we used to con-

ceal under the bed in the daytime, before we had sewers and such—and the laugh would be on the man who pulled the badger.

And you could generally hear that laugh from one end of town to the other. And the victim would generally keep the joke to himself, and would try to steer some other traveling man or sojourner up against the Great Bend bunch for another “badger fight.”

If I have omitted any details of those badger fights, just ask some of the old-timers, such as Jake Miller, Charlie or Don Dodge, Frank D. Wilson, L. B. Wilcox, Jack Neeland, and so on. And by display of a little detective ability, you might discover quite a few of our residents who have at some time or other “pulled the badger.”

First Airship Sighted

Some thirty or more years ago the flying machine, in which human beings would fly through the air and sport among clouds, was a visionary dream. True, every school boy or girl had read about "Darias Green and his flying machine," and readers of fiction had been entertained and amused by the perusal of Jules Verne's "Around the World in Eighty Days," in which Jules had his hero make his trip around the earth in an airship.

It may be that Charlie Zutavern's boyish imagination was whetted by the remembrance of the described sensations of Darias as he soared through the air in his improved contraption of wings and other doodads, then came to a realization of his unfortunate omission of proper provision for alighting. Or he may have been but recently reading of Verne's hero, and the way he outwitted all enemies on both land and sea by building a boat that floated in the air. But no matter what the incentive, Charlie sat down and wrote a story for a Kansas City paper for which he was the special correspondent at Great Bend, which story the paper printed. I have not a copy of the story, but to the best of my recollection it appeared something like this:

Great Bend, Kans., July 14, 1898—Last night about 11 o'clock, as parties were driving home over the prairies from a visit to the neighboring town of Larned, they were startled and greatly puzzled to see in the eastern heavens

what first appeared to be a star or meteor, gliding towards them in a zigzag course.

At first it appeared to be rather close to the earth, but it seemed to rise as it came nearer to them. And the light or meteor, or whatever it was, grew larger all the time, its course more steady and its altitude higher. As it came nearer them, and appeared to be thousands of feet up in the air, a dark bulk was noticed, which grew more prominently defined as it drew nearer. Then was heard a pop-popping sound as from exhaust of a steam engine, and trailing behind it was a long line of black smoke.

All grew more plainly defined as the thing came nearer, and the roar of its engine was more deafening, accompanied by a swishing sound in the air as the bulk thundered along.

Now it was directly overhead, up among the stars, but near enough so that they could partially make out its outlines.

It seemed to be a boat shaped contraption, some fifty or sixty feet long, with two immense wings, one on each side, and a long, fan shaped tail or rudder—like the spread out tail of a hawk when soaring. There seemed to be an undulation of the wings and a varying position of the tail. It must have been propelled by an immense fan, or fans, on its top, as a droning whir could be heard. At its front end an immense light showed and the outlines of a large reflector could be seen. In the middle, and underneath, was also another light whose rays

were reflected down to earth. This light was doubtless carried to show the navigator how far he was from terra firma. The monster was most certainly manipulated, and its course directed by human intelligence, although no man or men could be seen by the awestruck observers. But as it passed directly over them it seemed that the light on the keel of the thing was, for a fleeting moment, turned full upon them.

The thing, whatever it was, soon disappeared in the darkness, as there was apparently no light in its rear; but the droning whir, and the pop of its engine could be heard for some minutes after it was lost to sight in the west.

That "special" of Charles, when read by his Great Bend friends, was voted one of his smoothest "pipe dreams." But in the light of development in air navigation during the last few years, should we not designate it as prophetic?

None of us who read it and laughed about it at the time were gifted to read the future. Had we been so gifted we would have looked upon Charlie, not as a joyful, rollicking good-natured lad full of ginger and imagination, but as one gifted with a foresight beyond his years. His imaginary theory of propulsion by "fans" is exemplified in the aeroplane propeller of today; his imaginary "wings" a developed reality; and the real flying machine soars in the air with the graceful movements of the chicken hawk poised aloft.

He Was Quick on the Trigger

Unswerving and undaunted courage, and a nerve that responds instantly to telepathy of the intellect are qualities of the human makeup that are universally admired and extolled throughout the world. Men possessing these qualities, no matter what the financial or social standing of such men may be, are naturally chosen as leaders, whether in peace or in war. And among the pioneers of Kansas many such men were discovered in humble life and selected as peace officers, and acted as leaders of the law and order element, to blaze the way for enlightened civilization.

One of such men, and one of the most efficient and courageous as marshal of our town, was Willis Winstead. While he was marshal in 1871, three fellows who had gained the reputation in this part of Kansas of being fearless desperados and "bad men" came to town and made their boasts that they were "going to get that marshal," Winstead.

Winstead entered a saloon kept by Wakefield and Smith, in a one story frame building that stood on the southwest corner of the public square. The three desperados were lined up at the bar, their guns on the bar in front of them. As the marshal entered the front door, one of them said: "There's that——marshal now," and snatching up his gun, fired, the bullet grazing Winstead's head and lodging in the door jamb. Simultaneously with the other shot, Winstead's gun barked

an echo, and the desperado went down with a bullet square between his eyes. The other two were not quick enough to retrieve their guns, and an order to "throw up your hands" was instantly complied with. The bystanders searched them for other weapons as the marshal kept them covered; and eventually he marched them off to jail.

Some weeks later, as Winstead was lying on a couch in the rear of that same saloon, watching a poker game, someone fired at him through a window, the bullet striking him in the elbow and ranging up the forearm. But the would-be assassin was never apprehended.

Mr. Winstead, during his term of office as town marshal, and later as he served as sheriff of Barton County, encountered many members of the unruly elements and invariably came out on top. His motto seemed to have been: "The Law and the Right Must Prevail."

A Man for Breakfast

In 1871, E. J. Dodge and his son, Wall, both now deceased, were freighting goods over to Great Bend from Ellsworth, on the Union Pacific, then the nearest railroad to our town. Arriving in Ellsworth one night they found the one hotel full up and had to bunk with the horses in a livery stable. The next morning they went into the B. and B. hotel for their breakfast. As they were seated at a table one of the typical "bad men" of the times came in and sat down opposite them. The waiter brought Mr. Bad Man some boiled beef. He iabbed his fork into it, held it up, and asked:

"This the best meat you got?"

Being told it was all right, and the best meat they had, he slammed it down on the table, jumped to his feet and roared:

"To hell with that kind o' meat! I want some man-meat for my breakfast," and strode out of the door and onto the sidewalk.

A young lad about 17 years old was passing the door at the time, when the fellow pulled a gun and shot the boy dead. He then got upon his pony, which had been left tied near the door, and moved off down the street.

The shot brought people out of the stores, and among them was the famous Bill Cody—"Buffalo Bill"—who was marshal of Ellsworth at the time. When Bill saw the dead boy, and the tough guy riding down the street a block or more away, he dropped to one knee, drew a

head upon the desperado with his rifle, and with one shot ended forever the fellow's search for "man-meat."

After viewing the two dead men for a few minutes, Squire Dodge remarked to his son:

"Well, Wallace, there's a man apiece for us. Let's be moseying in and finish our breakfast."

A Skirmish With "Indians"

During the summer of 1873, as the late Wall H. Dodge related to me, a man named Logan came to Great Bend from the eastern part of the state, where, according to his statements, he had been city marshal of various towns, an Indian fighter of parts, and an all around terror to evil doers in general. He was exceedingly profuse in describing his wonderful prowess. The settlers here then had seen his specie before, and "savied" his prattle, while biding their time to make use of his self-asserted talents.

After Logan had entertained the crowd at Allen's Corner with a multitudinous superfluity of words and wild western gestures, G. W. Poole, Bill Zutavern, Ham Bell, A. S. Allen, Bill Maher and several others, concluded they would give Mr. Logan a try-out. They began to talk about a band of Indians who had broken away from the reservation and gone on the warpath. Then later a runner came in and reported that the Indians were headed this way, and might reach here by the next day. Immediately the residents formed an organization for home protection. Logan, by reason of his experience in such matters, was selected by unanimous consent to head this band of home guards.

A goodly bunch of able bodied residents were enlisted, and the next day, with Logan at their head, they rode south through the sand hills. They met the party of redskins coming towards them on the run; filling the

air with blood-curdling yells; leaning low over the withers of their ponies as they came in an unfaltering charge.

The boys who had provided Logan with his mount, had selected a big "skeery" bay horse, unused to prairie travel, and when the Indians came yelling to the charge, Logan's horse turned tail and started north towards town. The horse, not being built to negotiate the shifting sands of the "great American desert," early in the retreat took a tumble—and Logan with him. Their leader was picked up and mounted on behind one of the home defenders and brought to town. He was nearly scared stiff, and when the redskins, who were white skins, dressed mostly in blankets, feathers and firewater, and who addressed each other as "A.S.," "Ham," "Bill," "G.W.," etc., as they rode leisurely into town, showed up, Logan took another tumble and jumped the town. The boys had him sized up rightly.

Exterminating Bedbugs

It was in 1878 when I first knew Erve Johnson and the Dunlavy brothers. Erve came to Great Bend from some place in the East and opened a jewelry and watch repair shop. Erve had his living quarters in a shed room at the rear of his store. The Dunlavy brothers, about 18 and 21, were brought out by their father to be established on a "claim" or stock ranch near town. They and Erve became good friends, and eventually Erve shared his sleeping quarters with them when they were in town.

One warm spring day the three boys held a powwow and decided something drastic should be done to clear their bedroom of unwelcome visitors. So they tore down the two beds and scattered them about the back yard; then each armed himself with a small oil can filled with kerosene, and were soon busy squirting oil into every crack and crevice of the bedsteads; Erve in his shirt sleeves, his glossy black hair stringing about his face; the Dunlavys in cowboy hats, wool shirts and top boots; all busy running down the thousands of bedbugs which had been growing fat off them during the winter.

Then down the alley—"Bloody Alley" we called it then—came reinforcements. The elder Dunlavy, a lean, rawboned man about six feet two, had come out to Kansas a few days before to see how his boys were getting along ranching. He had been in town long enough to learn the road to Rome—the leading saloon—and had traveled it frequently, to "do as the Romans did." In

fact, that morning he had been "liquidating" the jag he had taken on the night before. He watched in silence the operations of the three boys, then staggered into the building by the rear door. Presently he reappeared with a big navy revolver in his hand, and with a Comanche yell, he sprang to the headboard of a bedstead which the boys were then working on, and five shots came in rapid succession, and that piece of furniture was knocked into kindling wood. It was all done before the boys realized what was happening. The shots brought people running from every direction, they thinking there was a bank robbery going on, a cowboy demonstration, or some little dispute over a back room poker game being settled in the usual way. What they saw was three husky young men laughing until the tears ran down their cheeks, and a gangling, tall old man disappearing through the back door, muttering:

"Dad burn 'em, I'll show 'em how to kill them gold-danged bloodsuckers."

Incidentally, Erve later announced that the bedbugs had emigrated to less dangerous camping grounds a few doors north, to the Southern hotel, where the grazing was more diversified, and where there was less danger of "spiritual" interference.

Hunting Wild Geese

In the late springtime of long ago, when old Sol began to smile warmly over this broad land of promise, and the April showers had awakened to life the Kansas sunflowers and prairie travelers, and the sloughs and draws and buffalo wallows put on their dresses of changing shades of green, and on the uplands of the rolling hills was spread a carpet of buffalo grass, this land of central Kansas became more attractive to the pioneer homeseekers, and kind Nature flaunted her banners of encouragement and promise to those of us who felt that, one day, this would be the garden spot of the West and supply the staff of life for millions of people yet to come.

Great herds of long legged and long horned cattle from the ranges to the south of us were driven up to these fertile prairies so long given up to the buffalo and the antelope and their Indian enemies, and fattened on the luscious verdure so free and plentiful, and when fattened were shipped from here to the markets of the East. Fortunes were made by the sturdy cowmen whose hardihood and perseverance won their just reward, although the hazard was sometimes great.

The cattle industry was not all velvet, either. For there were many risks to run, many chances to take. The untamed red men often disputed the white man's right to forage on these hunting grounds, and fortunes,

as well as precious lives, were sometimes lost by the venturesome herdsman.

Man was not the only two-footed visitor that sought sustenance and freedom on these greening plains. From the warm haven of the south to which they had migrated in the fall before the wintry winds had come with snow and ice, came millions upon millions of other two-legged visitors, the ducks and brants, cranes, pelicans and wild geese. The honk of the wild geese as they winged their flight, in V-shaped formation with a veteran gander in the lead, could be heard from the brightening dawn to the dewy eve, and often far into the night, as they sought these favored feeding grounds.

Today we miss these annual visitors. Only once in a great while can a wandering flock be now seen passing overhead, the sunlight glinting from their graceful pinions and the springtime breezes carrying down to earth the calls of their leader and the answering honk of the following string. The hunter who nowadays bags a wild goose, a crane or a pelican is justified in boasting of it with profuse verbosity.

Only the two-legged settlers of the human family who stayed here and built their nests and reared their young on the broad prairies, instead of going south in the winter and flitting back in the spring, are now enjoying to the fullest the products of this generous soil.

I distinctly remember some incidents of my first wild goose chase in Barton County. It was in the spring of 1878. Rufe Bell asked me one day to go with him out

south of the Arkansas River a few miles to his claim. He said:

"Get you a shooting iron—a shotgun—and some goose shot and come along with me. See them fellows?" (And he pointed overhead to where several big flocks of wild geese were flying north). "I got a hunch they been browsing down on the marsh near my quarter and are now headed for a swim in the Cheyenne lakes."

A printer friend of mine, Bob Mitchell, had an army rifle which his father, a Union soldier, had brought back with him from the war. The rifle had been bored out by a gunsmith and as Bob said, "was a dandy goose gun—would get 'em anywhere within 200 yards, easy."

This gun he had offered to loan to me. I procured some powder, goose shot and a box of percussion caps and material for "patches." Before we started Bob said:

"Now, don't load 'er too heavy, Bill. Leave me show you how much powder and shot to use," and he loaded the old musket in a manner which he said would "get the goose grease every pop." Then he continued:

"Hold 'er solid against your shoulder when you fire, for she sometimes kicks like a bay steer, and is liable to pi your form if you hold 'er loose like."

We drove out to Rufe's claim in a "democrat wagon," a spring wagon with a high seat on the front end, drawn by a span of livery stable bronc ponies, and in an hour after leaving town we were nearing the claim.

Numerous flocks of geese went over us as we dodged around across the sand hills. But Rufe advised that we

not shoot any until we got to that marsh, where he was sure there would be better chances. He had no gun, but I suggested we take turns about shooting.

Before we got to the marsh we could see hundreds, yes, thousands of the game swirling and dropping gracefully into the grass. We approached slowly, until we could see signs of restlessness among the fowls, then we whipped up on the run, when great swarms of the big birds took to wing. As one mass moved toward us, apparently to pass over our heads, Rufe said:

"Take that bunch, Bill. Wait 'til they have just passed, then plug 'em in the tail—you'll get more."

I was on my knees, with my back to the seat, and I "plugged 'em in the tails," holding the butt of the gun tight to my shoulder. Simultaneous with the roar of the explosion I was bumped back against the seat with the recoil, my head striking the back rest on the seat and a constellation of stars were shooting all around me.

"Cracky, boy, that was a good one," said Rufe, "got two—three—four and there's another one a-fluttering."

We gathered up five plump geese from that one shot. When we got over the excitement from the first volley Rufe said:

"Now, load 'er up again, same way Bob showed you, and I'll try my luck with the old blunderbuss."

I poured in the proper amount of powder from the cow-horn slung across my shoulder, rammed down a patch, then reached into my coat pocket for the tobacco

bag into which I had put the shot—and drew a blank. I remembered having put the box of caps in my pocket, of slinging the powder horn on my shoulder. But what did I do with that bag of shot?

I remember—I laid it on top of a fence post when Bob had loaded up for me, and it was probably lying there yet, unless Bob had discovered and retrieved it.

The lack of goose shot—or any kind of shot—ended our hunting for that day. But not the excitement.

Rufe was putting a well down at his claim. A few days before our visit he had dug a hole four feet across and about six feet deep, and he had brought me along to help him drive a pipe, with a sand point, some six or eight feet down to water.

When we looked down into that hole, we saw a big live jackrabbit crouched down at one side, and close to him another jack, but stretched out dead. Rufe got the pipe and tools from the wagon, stuck one end of the pipe down into the excavation and was preparing to hop down, when “z-z-z-” came a rasping rattle from the hole opposite the live jack.

“Great Jehosephat, Bill! See that rattler! Me jump down there? Not just yet a while.”

Having no ammunition for our gun, the only means we had of killing the rattlesnake was with the twelve foot length of one and a half inch pipe, and it took quite a while of maneuvering and jabbing with the pipe before the snake was finally killed. And even when we knew his snakeship was wiggling around with his head mashed

flatter than a flounder, we were neither one anxious to climb down and cultivate a closer acquaintance. The rabbits and snake had got into the hole easily enough but were unable to get out.

Do you wonder that I so distinctly remember the incidents of my first wild goose hunt in Barton County, even though it took place some 47 years ago?

Fort Zarah

When the first settlers, who had decided that Barton County was destined to one day become an agricultural territory, drifted in with their ox teams drawing canvas covered wagons in which they had crowded their earthly possessions, consisting principally of the wife and a flock of children, a few home made bed quilts and straw ticks, a frying pan and an iron pot, a coffee mill and some earthenware plates with a cup and saucer or two—when those people squatted here, there was not much in the outlook to encourage home building.

Nothing but barren plains in sight. In the way of vegetation, miles and miles of buffalo grass on the uplands and a patch of blue stem grass now and then in the valleys and creek and river bottoms. There were a few trees along the water courses; stunted, and some of them also blackened by the prairie fires occasionally started by roving bands of Indians on the hunt or the war path, and the tall, lonesome spikes of yucca plants struggling for life in an apparently barren waste.

In 1869 or 1870 the Government established an outpost, or small post fort, some three miles east of what is now Great Bend and named it Fort Zarah. At this fort, on the old Santa Fe trail, was maintained a small force of troopers, equipped with horses, guns and ammunition, for the protection of those who wandered their westward way to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and on beyond the Rockies.

And those troopers were not out on a holiday by any means. At any hour of day or night they were liable to be called out to intercept or disperse predatory Indian bands, whose route from the Indian reservation on the south was free from interruption until they reached this point.

I regret that a record of the exact time of the establishment of Fort Zarah, printed by B. B. Smith, in 1879 in a little booklet entitled, "Heart of the New Kansas," has been lost. The book contained much interesting data concerning Fort Zarah, its establishment, its officers and its activities.

Fort Zarah was abandoned, and the troops moved on west to Fort Larned in 1872. Later the Larned fort was abandoned and a new fort built at Dodge City—Fort Dodge. This latter is now the Kansas State Soldiers' Home, where the declining years of many old Union soldiers and their wives are made comfortable.

A substantial granite trail marker now marks the sight of Fort Zarah, and some of the older settlers can outline the spot where stood the walls of the Fort, its barracks and stables. But where once the Government troops answered the calls to mess, or mounted their wiry mustangs to ride with clanking accoutrements to the defense of the early day pioneers, now can be seen only tilled fields of corn, wheat and alfalfa; and peace and prosperity reign where once—not so very long ago—human hearts beat fast with the threat of disaster, children were hurried to cover in sod houses or dugouts,

and brawny empire builders stood on guard with ready rifles and undaunted courage.

It was indeed a happy stroke of intuition when that magnificent new hotel block in Great Bend was named the "Zarah," commemorative of the first outpost of civilization established by the Government in this locality.



Could Shimmie But Could Not Skate

Some of the doctors of today who deplore the hardships of their lot when called upon to jump into a closed car and make a ten or fifteen mile drive into the country on a cold or disagreeable night ought to have been here in the early days and learned some of the real honest-to-goodness tough propositions that Doctors Shaw, McCormick, White and others of that day were up against. Dr. Frank Lightfoot, still with us, also had his share of the fun.

Each doctor had a horse and buggy—sometimes a pair of broncs—and calls into the country had to be

responded to then just the same as now, no matter what the state of the weather. I remember more particularly Dr. S. J. Shaw's outfit. He had a medium sized bay mare and top buggy. The mare, Nellie, had (what my wife says was the St. Vitus dance) a habit of weaving back and forth when standing hitched, and rapidly lifting one front foot after the other—the young folks of today would say she was doing the shimie, whatever that is. But she would not skate.

One night the doctor had a call over northeast of the Cheyenne Bottoms about twelve miles from town. It was a bitter cold night, and the doctor and his faithful driver, John Burke, took plenty of buffalo robes and blankets with them. On the way home they were congratulating themselves on how well they were getting on, when they struck a bit of icy road, the ice being covered with a thin coating of snow, so that they did not know it was there until they were onto it. The horse was not very rough shod, and began sprawling about in a grotesque manner, finally going completely down. The men got out and unhitched her and tried to get her on her feet, but without success. She refused to skate any more. They then got the buffalo robes and blankets and spread them out on the ice about the animal and finally got her onto her feet. They would spread a robe ahead of her and lead her onto it, then spread another and so on, until they got the animal off the ice and onto good going again. They consumed a couple of hours with this kind of amusement while the northwest wind was furnishing the music and keeping time by pelting particles of ice in their

faces. But they drove slowly from there on; and when they struck more ice, they promptly blanketed it and drove on.

I wish good, jolly Dr. Shaw was with us again to entertain us with his wonderful fund of jokes and good will, never with a complaint, also we wish he were here to enjoy some of the comforts and pleasures of country practice which our physicians of today enjoy. And I wonder how many doctors of today have for their body servant or "shoffer" as loyal and faithful a man as John Burke proved to be in his many years of service for his doctor. He survived his employer a number of years, but until the feebleness of old age overcame him, John had all the home comforts at the Shaw home.

Boys and young men, do not forget that service and loyalty are honorable, no matter how exalted nor how humble the lot may be, nor how irksome nor undesirable the service called for.

He who does his duty best earns sweetest fame,
Honor good examples set. Get in the game.

A Good Story Teller

Every one who has lived in Barton County for the past forty years, and especially those of the north part of the county, knew our old friend, Sam Shattauck. And to know him was to like him. Sam was a Union war veteran, and a man who had full measure of the tests of mental and physical endurance put upon those who have assisted in upholding the honor of our country and making our county and state a good place in which to live.

My first recollection of Sam was when in the later seventies, I spent the day at Marsh Meeker's up north of Hoisington. Sam came over to make a neighborly visit to the Meekers. During the afternoon he entertained us in his pleasing manner with stories of coon hunts, escapades at foraging during the war, and incidents of his dealings with the Indians. And in following years, I enjoyed many an hour listening to the jokes and quips he would pull off. I shall here try to recall some of them:

When Sam was a young man he attended a big revival meeting. A good sister sought him out as being a likely prospect for conversion, and said:

"My dear young man, do you realize that you are liable to be called at any moment?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Sam, "I know we are liable to be called any time. But d'you know, I made three

men throw down their hands last night when I called 'em, and I only had a pair of deuces."

When asked if it was dry over on the Ridge, he replied:

"Huh, I reckon you might call it dry. I got to haul water up from the creek to soak my hogs up so they'll hold swill."

A story, which I think he told in the lobby of the old Typer House, where he took his food when in town serving on the Board of County Commissioners, was a story of one of his old army friends, whom I think he called Cap.

He said this comrade was a precise and neat appearing man who was always courteous and accommodating to the ladies. At one time Sam and his "lady killer friend," as he termed Cap, were out to a dinner where the hostess was "extra particular" to have everything just so. At every plate was a relish in the shape of a nice dish of cold slaw garnished with real cream.

Cap reached with his fork to sample the slaw, when he discovered in it a wriggling woolly caterpillar. He glanced across the table and saw, from the look of horror on the face of his hostess, that she also had discovered the worm. Cap jabbed his fork into the slaw and hastily covered the caterpillar over, then lifted a generous fork full of the slaw to his mouth and swallowed it, smacking his lips with satisfaction. Sam was sure Cap had swallowed the worm, and wondered at the look of great

relief and the charming smile which spread over the face of their hostess.

Later he asked Cap:

"How the devil could you swaller that thing?"

"Oh," replied Cap, "a feller like me, who spent four years in the army, and six weeks of that time in Libby Prison, wouldn't gag at a little thing like that, to save a lady's feelings."

Sam had a neighbor who came out from New York to try the farmers' game. One day he complained to Sam about a cow he had bought recently.

"The doocid critter," he said, "won't give down her milk. When I got her a few weeks ago she give 22 quarts of milk a day; and now I only get 5 quarts a milkin', and I milk her four or five times a day, too. Wonder if she's been gittin' some jimpson weed?"

Sam had a poet friend who sometimes failed to connect with the proper inspiration—"the divine afflatus"—as it were. One day he said to Sam, when he could not find just the word he wanted:

"I reach and reach, but I can not grasp."

"When I git that-a-way," says Sam, "I back up agin a door jamb or a post, an' scratch."

Before he was married, Sam said, he had a sort of an uncertain feeling, like when he first tried to smoke a pipe—sort of a doubt about how he would come out of it when he "popped the question" to the girl he wanted to marry. But he made a date to call and spend the

evening with her, determined to settle the momentous question then.

When he reached her home she met him at the door and ushered him into the parlor. Soon as he entered he noticed that she had removed from the room all of the chairs but one! One chair for two people! Then he knew things were all right, and proceeded to "pop."

Surely a man possessing and generously using the wonderful gift of entertainment possessed by Mr. Shattauck, has done much to lighten the cares and brighten the pathways of many others, and he well deserved the many years of life vouchsafed him.

A Wild Beast at Large

At a certain season of the year the senior high school boys have the time of their young lives, "hazing" the "preps" or "sophs" or ambitious young "mutts" or whatever they mind to call them, and putting the fear of God into the souls of those young neophytes. Their favorite "stunt" appears to be to "gang" a victim when they catch him some evening—the later the better—in the company of some girls; take him by force of superior numbers, load him into an automobile and drive into the country some five or ten miles on a deserted highway, then dump him out and speed back to town, leaving the "freshie" to make his way home as best he can.

The boys who have thus been victimized may be interested in reading about the boys of the early days in and around Great Bend, when high schools were practically unknown here, but when the spirit of young deviltry was as rampant among the youth as it is today. Fred Witte and the Koopman boys are my authority for the incident I shall relate:

It was early in the eighties when a young lad of about sixteen or seventeen came out from an Eastern state to visit with his cousins, the Koopmans and Wittes. He had not been here long until he told the boys here they need not try to pull any of their monkey business off on him; he was "wise" to their "badger fights," and "snipe hunts" and things like that; for some of his relatives who had been out to Kansas before him and returned East

had told him all about that stuff. The Kansas boys told him they were glad he was so well posted, and they would not try any such stunts on him.

There was quite a bunch of lads about his own age, from twelve to eighteen, living not far apart in the community down near the mouth of the Walnut Creek—the Koopman, Witte, Harris boys, and so on. And they “ganged” together, as boys always have done and always will, for mutual amusement and recreation, and they did not propose to let this new “wise guy” from the East get away with his bluff, get off without some experience of his own to relate when he got back home.

They took him around with them, showed him the various things of interest, the swimming and fishing holes along the creek, the prairie dog towns up on the higher ground where the bluestem left off and the buffalo grass commenced; they found real badger holes where they dug for hours with spade and shovel to dislodge Mr. Badger from his den; they went out with him at nights to hear the coyotes howling in the distance; took him over the site of old Fort Zarah where the U. S. soldiers were stationed in the earlier days to protect the settlers and the travelers over the old Santa Fe trail from Indian assaults, etc.

There was little then left to show of the old fort; only a few depressions in the ground, with some stones that had once been the walls of the fort. In the side of one depression the gang discovered quite a large hole where some animal had been recently digging.

"By golly," cried one of the boys, "he's been here lately—see where he's started to dig him a den. Say, we've got to look out for him."

"What are you talking about? Look out for what," asked the visiting cousin.

"Why, that mountain lion, or jaguar, or timber wolf, or whatever it is the fellers up the creek have been telling about. It's been pestivating around for a week or so, killing a calf or a colt now and then, and howling something awful at nights. Must have escaped from a circus, or come down from the mountains."

Then others of the gang told about what they had heard of the doings of this fierce intruder.

A few evenings later, when the stage was all set, the "props" properly arranged, the Harris and Koopman boys, with the visiting cousin, went down along the creek fishing. Fred Witte was not with the gang—he had "other fish to fry."

Fred had a big black Newfoundland dog, an intelligent animal and very teachable. The dog had a deep and rumbling voice, like all his breed, and Fred had taught him to make a very peculiar howl when he—Fred—whistled a certain signal. A suitable place for Fred and the dog to be concealed had been arranged by the gang.

Along in the early evening, when the shades of night began to creep over the land, the fishermen decided to cease their angling and to start rambling toward the Koopman home. As they picked their way along the creek banks they were suddenly startled by an unearthly

howl, and they heard a rattle in the underbrush not far away.

"Golly, boys," said one of them, "let's beat it for home—that feller's mighty clost," and the gang started for the Koopman home on the run.

The native sons, being more accustomed to negotiating a passage through dense underbrush than their cousin, were soon in the lead with the visiting cousin bringing up the rear.

The tailender was making tracks as fast as he could when again that awful howl went up, seemingly much nearer. He turned his head to look back as he ran, when he tripped and fell sprawling.

As he got to his feet he again looked back and saw the dark outline of an immense animal form in the underbrush. A big black head was plainly outlined and two luminous eyes were fixed upon him out of the darkness.

The other boys were quite a distance ahead of him. He saw, close by, a tall young elm tree about eight inches through at the butt, with the first limbs some twelve to fourteen feet from the ground. Up this tree he shinned and secured a perch in its branches.

"Hurry, boys," he yelled. "Git the guns and come back quick."

The gang was soon returning, and as he heard, then saw their approach he again yelled:

"Hurry up, fellers. He's right over there, in the brush just beyond that clump of sumacs. It's that

mountain lion—big as a horse, he is, and chompin' his teeth at me."

Soon the gang was at the foot of the tree, looking up at him with expressions on their young faces that puzzled him. Then he heard a noise in the direction of the animal. As he saw it emerge from the concealment of the underbrush, and walking beside it Fred Witte, whose face was beaming with laughter, he "tumbled" mentally and almost tumbled physically out of his safe retreat aloft.

Those blamed Kansas yahoos had put one over on him for sure.

Ghosts in the Court House

How many people now in Barton county remember the old county court house with its observatory on the top, built, I think, in 1875? And how very proud we all were of that "magnificent structure," a two-story and basement affair with four fronts—north, south, east and west—originally planned, but steps leading to but two of the entrances were built, one on the east facing Cowgill street, and the other facing Maggie street on the west. The building was about half the size of the present court house. It was of brick with Cottonwood stone trimmings. The court room at the time was the largest assembly room in the city, and all the big meetings were held there. Religious and political gatherings, shows, dances, church oyster suppers, and county normal schools, all had open sesame to that court room when it was not in use for legal business. The court room was heated with two big stoves for over fifteen years. Stoves were also used for heating the office rooms.

The shingled roof was of rather steep pitch, and on top of this roof, in the center, was a pagoda-like affair which we called the cupola. This could be reached only by going up a ladder through a cubby hole in the ceiling of one of the jury rooms on the second floor, then up another ladder to a trap door in the floor of the cupola.

The county jail and rooms for the sheriff's office and residence were in the basement, as were the vaults for storing papers, books and so on from the different offices. The garret over the court room and county offices on the

second floor was a commodious affair, and in the course of years this garret was pretty well filled up with cast off junk of all kinds. In this garret was also stored a supply of coffins for burying the county poor. When people climbed the ladder into the garret to reach the second ladder to go out on top, by common consent there was no tarrying among those wooden overcoats.

And there were quite a number of visitors to that cupola. From it, on a clear day, one could see for many miles in every direction. Pawnee Rock and Ellinwood could be seen very plainly with the naked eye, the buildings could be counted and the streets and alleys traced.

There were no trees of any size to clutter up the view. With a field glass Larned on the west could be seen. A most interesting panorama was stretched away on every side. The Arkansas river, bordered by the glittering sand dunes on the south, and by a few trees along the north bank; the Walnut creek on the east and north winding a tortuous course which could be followed for many miles with the eye by reason of the scrubby growth of trees along its banks.

One day Mose, a black boy of about twenty, who was general factotum at A. S. Allen's drug store—a sort of chore boy, janitor and delivery boy—asked A. S. Allen:

“Mista Allen, what you-all sposen all dem folkses go up on de co’thouse fo’ to see?”

“To view the landscape, I suppose,” replied Allen.
“Have you ever been up there?”

"No, boss, I ain't nevah been up dat high. Nevah seen no land 'scapen, 'cept what Mistah Heizah done let 'scape f'om him an' let git snapped up by dem tendah footses f'om de east."

Allen thought that was a pretty good one on Dave Heizer, so he repeated the conversation when Dave, Al Schermerhorn and several others of the court house bunch came into the drug store. Then that bunch got busy. They secured from Doc Bain an old human skeleton, took it to the court house attic and placed it in one of the coffins, with the lid off, close to the head of the ladder. They then fastened a cord to the neck of the skeleton, hooked the cord over a nail in a rafter overhead, then let the other end of the cord hang down into the jury room. They arranged others of the coffins around in plain sight of the opening.

When the stage was set they awaited opportunity to put on the show. That opportunity came in a day or so, when Mose told his boss he would like to get off for a while and go up on top of the court house. Allen told him he could go that afternoon about 4 or 5 o'clock—he could see the land escaping better about that time of day. He put Mose to work at something that kept him busy about that time, and until after six. Then he let him off, telling him he had better hop over to the court house now and go up.

Mose climbed the first ladder, saw a few coffins lying around and did not tarry in that attic. Then he went up the next ladder and up on top of the cupola. When they heard him go outside a couple of the sche-

mers slipped up the first ladder and closed the trap door, fastening it on the lower side. They had smeared the skeleton with phosphorus so it would be plainly seen in the attic darkness.

Mose was not much interested in the view, and soon started down into the attic. As the gang below heard him coming down, they uttered dismal and agonizing groans and moans. Mose passed part way down the ladder in his descent, then paused and looked below. Then one of the gang pulled on the cord, and the skeleton slowly raised up out of the coffin facing Mose.

There was an unearthly yell, and a clatter of scrambling feet as Mose hurried back up the ladder, as he could not see where the opening ought to be, and he did not want to skirmish around among those coffins to find his way down. Going out on the cupola he uttered yell after yell for help.

When he was yelling, the gang went up, shoved the skeleton back into the coffin and put on the lid, then slipped quietly up the second ladder to see what Mose was doing, Allen leading the bunch. As he reached the top he saw Mose in the act of climbing over the railing about the observation platform. Allen called to him:

"Here, Mose, you mutt, what are you doing? You'll fall off of there if you're not careful."

Mose paused a straddle of the railing when he heard his boss.

"Fo' de Lawd, Mistah Allen, I'm gittin outen heah sudden. I aim to slide down the roof an' jump off."

"But you can't jump off this building. You would break your fool neck. It's more than 40 feet to the ground."

"But, boss, I kaint go down dat grave ya'd place. Dey's ha'nts down dere. I hearn 'em a groanin' an' a moanin', an' I see a whole passel of coffins too. An' one ghost he done jump outen de coffin, wave him ahms, an' retch out fo' me. I kaint go down dat away."

"Nonsense, Mose. There are no ghosts down here. You been tapping that jug too often, and it made you see things," said Allen.

They could not convince him that he had imagined all that bosh about ghosts, and moans and skeletons dancing up and down. They had a hard time getting him to come down through the attic, and when he hit the floor, he tarried not, but rushed out of the court house and to the drug store on the dead run.

Allen followed him, and finding a black boy who was still upon the edge of hysterics, administered a soothing concoction which Dr. Bain recommended in cases of delirium tremens. Bain examined Mose and said:

"He has a bad attack, A. S. He has evidently been hitting too many high balls. Cut off his supply for a while."

Mose was still the faithful assistant around the drug store, but ever after his experience in the attic he could not be induced to go near the court house. And he did not tap that jug so often thereafter.

Two Impromptu Duckings

Addie Birdsall was a natural blonde, tall, willowy of form, with an open countenance that invited friendship and gave promise of pleasing companionship. In 1886 she was a clerk in the ladies' department of the popular C. Samuels store, now the Henry Born store.

The store building was being extended to the west to give more room for the rapidly growing business of Caesar's fashion emporium, and the Morrison Brothers had the contract for the building.

Those Morrison brothers, by the way, were an active feature of Great Bend's rapidly growing business activities of that day. Will Morrison, the structural architect, was the oldest of the brothers, and the head of the firm. Port Morrison was the boss of the stone and brick work, and Charlie Morrison, the boss carpenter and finisher, while Jack Morrison, the kid of the brotherhood—was an able assistant in all the departments of building.

While working on the Samuels building, Charlie and Addie struck up an acquaintance which grew stronger as the days went by, and finally Charlie mustered up sufficient courage to ask permission to call at her home.

It was his first "date" with a Great Bend girl, and of course Charlie toggged up in his best bib and tucker—a frock coat, patent leather shoes and a fresh shave—and, on the evening appointed, called at the home of the fair blonde.

The Birdsall home at the time was in the southwest part of town, about Twelfth and Morton streets. The day had been fine, but in the evening one of those sudden downpours of rain swept the town, and the waters rushed in a regular river down the swale which extended through that part.

But Addie and Charlie were too busy extending the usual gossip of the day, speculating on the future prospects of the city, etc.—you know how such grave topics will engross young folks to the exclusion of everything else—that they were not bothered over the rain storm.

Finally (and in such cases there is always a finally) Charlie said good night, after agreeing to Addie's invitation to call again, and started for his hotel uptown.

Only along Main Street and the north and south side of the square were there any street lights, and the sidewalks were only narrow plank affairs down in the neighborhood of the Birdsall home. Charlie had not gone half a block until he missed the board walk and plunged up to his waist into the muddy water of a drainage ditch alongside the street.

A few days later Addie came to the back of the store where Charlie was at work and said:

"Mr. Morrison, can't you come down this evening and play casino? Mame will be home, and Jim is coming over to spend the evening, too." But she did not sing, "It ain't goin' to rain no more."

Charlie had not had his Sunday suit cleaned, and those patent leather shoes were simply impossible, yet;

so he made some excuse about having to help Will to figure on a new job they were going to bid on, and so that "date" was not made.

But there were other evenings, and other pleasing girls—also other unlooked for traps to dampen the ardor of impetuous youth.

Captain J. B. Hannum, a stone mason, whose vigorous manhood included the erection of many of the brown sandstone structures which in those days it was thought would last forever, also had two daughters; one, the elder, a stately brunette, and a younger daughter, more buxom, possessing golden locks of pronounced attraction.

In the course of business Charlie receive an invitation to spend the evening at the Hannum residence on Stone Street near Forest. By that time the light colored trousers and frock coat had been cleaned and pressed, and a new pair of more substantial shoes had been procured by the young carpenter, and the vision of the younger Hannum girl, whom he had met socially, was tucked away in some cranny of his busy brain, so he heartily accepted the invitation and his second "date" was made.

The evening was enjoyed, of course; so much so that it was after midnight when he bade good night to the young ladies and started to roost.

The night was dark, there had been rain the day before. Again he missed the board walk (the city ordinance only called for street lights until midnight). The electric light line was just being put in. They were

installed on Main Street, but on the side streets the light poles were just being put in.

When Charlie lost the sidewalk, he found something else. He stepped into one of the holes about two feet wide and five feet deep which had been dug for the light poles, and as the rain had filled it with water Charlie went into it with a splash and a blub-blub nearly up to his neck. And he says whenever he hears that song, "It ain't goin' to rain no more," he thinks of those early galivanting days and the resultant dampening thereof.

As a sort of sequel, however, I may state that no amount of involuntary duckings or interrupted galivanting discouraged Charlie's determination to find a fair haired mate, and he and Mrs. Charlie are now a pair of our most staid and dependable grandparents.

Two Misdirected "Mashes"

Some men will just naturally "tell tales out of school." I warned I. W. Pursel that if he kept on with his story I would be tempted to put it in black and white so that it could be handed down to posterity as a lasting record of his galivanting days. With this warning confronting him, he went on with his story and here it is:

Time, in the early eighties; place, Great Bend; principal actors, two young men of the day, unmarried, who spent their days at honest toil, and their nights—well, I will not speak of all their nights, just one in particular.

"Ise," you all know him, was then the engineer at the Clements & Hulme flour mill. He was the entire engineering force and carried his dinner in a tin pail and ate it—his dinner, not the pail—in the engine room while watching the steam gauge and the fire box.

Johnnie Durkin was the head miller, and he and Ise were rather chummy. John came down into the engine room one day while Ise was eating his dinner, and bantered the engineer to "dress up" and attend a masquerade ball on the next evening. Ise agreed, and warned John that he (the miller) would not be able to penetrate his (the engineer's) disguise.

The night of the ball came, and the two cronies went, but each one separately so the other would not catch onto his makeup.

Ise wandered about the hall sort of aimless like, being more interested in trying to figure out which of the

numerous male joy-makers was his chum, Durkin, than in securing a partner and shaking his leg. But he was not able to spot Durkin among the maskers. He was familiar with Durkin's build—a rather small, dapper young man he was—and thought he could easily detect his mannerisms and habit of carrying himself. But he could not find the little miller and finally began to size up the lady dancers with a view to picking out a partner for the next quadrille.

A cute little beauty caught his eye. She was dressed as a Spanish maiden—short skirts, a flaming red sash, one of those sleeveless jackets bespangled and bedecked with ribbons—a bolero, I think they called it—high heeled slippers showing neatly turned ankles.

"Oh, boy," thought Ise, "that's her, I'll try my luck."

Just then fate—and the Spanish maid—stopped in front of him. She jiggled a tambourine saucily in his face, clogged with her trotters, bumped the tambourine on her knee and then on her head and started to twinkle away, with a saucy nod to the bewitched engineer. Ise was caught, all right; and he followed her up and got the next dance—which was prolonged to several next dances. Finally they sat down for a breathing spell. Directly a flashy lady, a regular society swell, came over to where they sat. She sat down on the Spanish girl's lap and whispered something to her. Then the two of them after having excused themselves to Ise, went to the ladies' waiting room to fix that unruly contraption called a bustle.

Ise kept his eye on that waiting room door, fearful that some other geek would grab his girl when she came out. But Lady Luck was still with him, and Ise soon froze to his conquest for the next waltz.

When the grand circle dance was called, at the close of which all were to unmask, Ise still had the fair Spaniard in leash.

The order to unmask was given. With fervid eyes and beating heart, our lady-killer engineer anxiously watched the operation of unmasking by the Spanish maiden, feeling certain that her face was beautiful in keeping with her form. The mask came off, and he saw—Johnnie Durkin, the miller.

Mr. Durkin, a brother-in-law of Col. Ike Pritchard, is now a staid business man of Wichita. I wonder if he remembers that prank of his boyhood days?

Elmer Epperson thinks it was possibly at that same ball that Frank Whitney got "mashed" on Pocahontas. Epp and Frank were playing in the orchestra. Frank told Epp he had wanted his wife, Mrs. Whitney, to mask and attend the ball. But she had said she was not feeling very well, and she thought she had better stay at home that night.

During the dancing Whitney got his eyes full of a lovely Indian maiden representing Pocahontas. He was smitten first dash out of the box, and whenever Pocahontas came around to the end of the hall where the musicians were, Frank's instrument was likely to drop a measure; and Frank was dropping remarks such as:

"Gosh, boys, ain't that a beauty—that Indian girl! Say, she's got me going south all right."

"Better cut out the rhapsodies," says Epp, "and get in on the melody. If your wife was here there would sure be a hair pulling."

But Frank was gone, head over heels, in admiration for Pocahontas—until the unmasking, when the Indian beauty came smilingly to the musicians' corner and said to Whitney:

"Fooled you that time, didn't I, Frank? Say, honey, is my black hair on straight? That gob in the red and white clown suit just hugged me something fierce in that last waltz. Wish you were dancing. I'm having a glorious time."

I forgot to state that Ise Pursel's suit was a red and white clown suit. But maybe there were two of them. Anyway Ise was on other grazing grounds until unmasking time came.

High Finance in 1871

One of the very earliest attempts at "high finance," where the Government was asked to step in and "make good" the damage done by some of her wards, the Indians, then held in the Territory of Oklahoma, was pulled off at a big cattle ranch up on the creek north and west of Pawnee Rock in the fall of 1871.

There were two partners, Veal and Void, who were grazing a large herd of some two thousand head of Texas cattle at that point. They employed eighteen to twenty men as herders, cook, etc., and had to haul all of their supplies from Russell, then the nearest railroad point, on the Union Pacific, most of the supplies being bought at Kansas City and shipped out to Russell.

At one time when their stock of supplies was getting low, Void suggested to Veal that he had better go down to Kansas City and stock up; and Veal was taken to Russell and started on his way.

Mr. Void on returning to the ranch got busy on his plan for "easy money." The Indians had been occasionally breaking away from the reservation and making raids on the settlers near the border, and the Government, being responsible for the good behavior of her wards, was called upon to "make good" for the damages done during those raids.

Void took his cowboys into his confidence and disclosed his scheme. A number of them togged up as Indians and made a raid on the V. and V. herd, driving

the cattle off to the south and presumably selling them to some other ranchman. Of course Void and the rest of his boys made a show of defending their stock and pursuing the naughty Indians.

They mapped out plans to produce proper evidence of the "raid," then put in a claim to Uncle Sam to pay for the loss of the cattle.

Veal knew nothing of the loss of the herd until he got back to Russell on his return from Kansas City. Void met him at Russell with a buckboard, and took him back to the ranch, deploring the loss and figuring with his partner on the chances of being reimbursed by the Government.

It was not long after his return to the ranch, however, until one or two of the cowboys became dissatisfied over not getting what they thought was a proper "divvy" from Void, and "spilled the beans" to Veal. Then the latter thought up a little "high finance" experiment of his own.

In those days there were no banks here, and the safety deposit box of the cattle firm was a stout leather satchel, which was being carefully guarded by Void, who hardly ever left it out of his sight. Veal got his partner to go with him to see after their claim against the Government. They were some miles away from the ranch, Void of course carrying the bagful of ready cash which he had received for the cattle, when Veal called out to him to halt. When Void turned around he found himself covered with a rifle in the hands of his partner.

"Stand where you are," commanded Veal; "take

your gun by the muzzle—don't touch the handle—and throw it over there," pointing to the right on the prairie. "Now toss that satchel over there to the left, then go and stand by that yucca clump 'til I tell you to move. Step lively, now."

Then Veal took the money bag and ripped it open; took out from the well filled satchel what he thought was coming to him for his half of the business, then told his partner to stay away from his gun but to help himself to what was left in the bag.

Veal then returned to the ranch, called in the cowboys and settled with them to their satisfaction.

I have not been able to learn whether or not the claim against the Government was settled by the latter. The acts above related were told to me by Mr. Don Dodge, who got the story from Veal himself. Other old-timers assure me of the truthfulness of the story. As there may be some relatives of the main actors in this episode still in this locality, I have not used their real names, merely changing the first letters. But the old settlers will remember the name of the firm without any stretching of the imagination or delving into the records of the past.

While this flyer into "high finance" of the pioneer days may appear rather crude in the eyes of "blue sky" artists of the present day, it had this advantage: The victims were not numerous, and the money involved was but "chicken feed" compared with that secured by war profiteers or infant industries of the twentieth century.

Allen's Corner

When a town is so small that the business houses can be counted on the fingers of your two hands; when the names of the streets as indicated on the town plats are practically unknown to half the residents, there is some distinctive point, some place of general knowledge to all that is first to come into mind when fixing a location in the town.

Such a point, in the days of my earliest knowledge of Great Bend, was Allen's Corner, the corner of Main Street and Forest Avenue. The store building on that corner was among the first business buildings erected in the town. Even before it was known as Allen's Corner it was about the center of the business section, the other buildings being scattered around the public square (laid out and platted as LaFayette Park, dedicated by the original Town Company to park purposes only). Early in the seventies the first court house was built in the center of the square, but for many years that was the only improvement made in the park.

Allen's Corner got its name when A. S. Allen, now deceased, was running a drug store there. Mr. Allen was then a comparatively young man; genial, courteous to all and full of that pep and love of fun which makes for friendship; and his place was soon conceded to be the most popular gathering place in town for those who had the time and inclination to crack jokes and tell the latest stories. Al Schermerhorn, Charles Dodge, Dr.

Bain, My Gillmore, Dave Heizer, Judge Townsley, Jim Dalziel and Frank D. Wilson were among the leading members of the crowds which gathered there, as I remember them in 1876 and 1877.

One gathering of the clan (not Ku Klux Klan, but all 100 per cent Americans) I remember quite well. They talked about the one-armed fiddler, the latest badger fight, the condition of the wheat crop, the prices of cattle, horses, mules, etc.

When mules were mentioned there was a Missourian who picked up his ears and took notice. When he got an opening to speak he said:

"Do you all know that thar mule beast is the know-in'est critter goin'? Let me tell yo' somethin' 'bout a mule I oncet had down in Mizzouri."

The chairman gave him the floor, and in his peculiar vernacular he described a long legged, mangy tailed yearling mule he once owned. The mule was running loose about the back yard. Near the back door lay a barrel of hard cider, and he said:

"That thar mule went up to the barrel, pulled the plug out of the barrel and slaked his thirst at the bunghole."

Then he described, in a droll manner, the crazy antics of the animal an hour or so after it had filled up on hard cider.

It was Allen, I think, who made the following comment on the story:

"I don't see that such a great amount of intelligence was exhibited by that mule. Now if it had been like this: If the mule had pulled the barrel out of the bung hole and slaked his thirst with the plug; or had plugged his thirst with the slake and barreled the bung hole; or had he thirsted his slake with the plug and bunged the barrel with his thirst-hole—if he had done something like that, now, I would vouch for his intelligence."

Schermerhorn said he did not think a mule showed much intelligence when he drank cider down in Bourbon, Missouri, where good whiskey was so plentiful. If it had happened in Kansas there might have been a valid excuse.

Doc Bain suggested that if that mule had so much intelligence his Missouri friend ought to have brought him along to Great Bend and got a job for him teaching school.

To this remark two or three of the assembly rather took exception, as they were either school teachers or had sweethearts who were. But when Allen supplied all the smokers with sample packages of Bull Durham, and the chewers with ample cuts of Kentucky long green, the good spirits of the gathering were restored.

The Fire Fighters

A small number of dinky little houses, shacks and shanties grouped in bunches or scattered along one side of what was called a street, if the downtrodden native grass and numerous ruts created by the passage of narrow tired wagons could be called a street. A few of the houses had square fronts extending up and above the peaks of the gables, and most of those fronts were decorated by signs reading "saloon," "dance hall," "billiards and pool." Some were built of planks running up and down with a shed roof of the same material; and here and there were covered wagons, and once in a while a tent, with open camp fires alongside surrounded by bewhiskered men in broad brimmed hats, pants thrust into boot tops, various colored shirts, and belts in which were stuck the ever present "shooting irons" of the time.

This was Great Bend in the making. And the environments were:

A bleak, open prairie with nothing to break the monotony of endless miles of dying grass, with here and there a bunch of upstanding yucca plants or grease weed and occasional depressions called buffalo wallows in which was stagnant water. To the north a few miles' distance a fringe of scrubby trees which circled around in irregular meanderings to the south and east, until it joined another fringe of timbered land that stretched

along the southern view and was finally lost in the hazy distance of the west and east—the Arkansas River.

It was a hazy autumn day in 1874. All day long the wind had been fitfully blowing in intermittent gusts from the southwest. But now it had changed to the northwest, and was pulsing with a more steady breath.

Suddenly there was a cry of "Fire."

The northwest wind had picked a burning brand from an open camp fire and flung it against a tent. The tent was soon a mass of flames which rapidly leaped to a nearby house.

At the cry of fire the people scampered from every house and tent, grabbing buckets, dish pans, tubs—anything that would hold water—and hurried toward the rapidly increasing flames. There were but half a dozen wells to supply the water for the town of probably two dozen houses. But as water could be reached by going down seven to ten feet to the level of the Arkansas River bed, it did not have to be lifted far. And soon there was a string of men carrying water to the fire, which was finally put out without having done any great amount of damage.

After the excitement was over, and the last glowing coal of living fire was drowned out, the population gathered at the principal saloons and graphically recounted their individual experiences. Rules were discussed as to the best methods of handling and controlling open camp fires. Tents should be pitched just so far from buildings; fire guards should be plowed, or dug or

burned around all buildings; each resident should keep a tub or barrel of water handy with a bucket, or buckets, convenient for immediate use, and other fire prevention methods were discussed.

Later the town council took up the matter in solemn conclave. A four wheeled fire wagon, to be drawn by hand, was built by the local wagon maker and blacksmith. The town council sent to Kansas City and bought two dozen leather buckets that would hold about three gallons of water each. A couple of sixteen foot ladders were made by a local carpenter, and the fire wagon with ladders and buckets was kept alongside of Dick Mannings' blacksmith shop and everybody told to grab 'em and get busy at the first alarm of fire.

There was no organization of fire fighters—everybody went "on his own." But there were a few men who were natural leaders and took hold of the organization of a bucket brigade and systematized the work to be done.

Then came the appointment of certain men to man the pumps or draw the water hand over hand from open wells; others to form a line and pass the filled buckets down the line to the fire, and back again to be refilled.

When a boy became old enough to handle a three gallon bucket full of water it was the height of his ambition to "get into line." And to climb up a ladder and hand a filled bucket to the man on the roof of a burning building was the work of a hero, second only to that of the man who stood on the slippery roof and emptied the bucket.

Small town stuff, did you say? Yes, to you now it may look like small town stuff. But was it? The lives of residents of the little frontier town depended on volunteer aid and assistance of their neighbors. Their business as well was at stake. Their future was in jeopardy. All honor is due the spontaneous, tireless and uncomplaining efforts—though crude and untrained—of the pioneer fire fighters of those days.

Today it is some different. The fire fighting equipment has kept pace with the growth of our town. But the spirit of the fire fighter is the same, handed down from generation to generation.

With the putting in of a waterworks plant for our city, the first regular organization for handling the equipment was formed. Twenty of the young men of the town met and formed the first Volunteer Fire Department. They elected a chief, a foreman, a secretary and treasurer; adopted a set of by-laws, rules and regulations, which was accepted by the mayor and city council, and which has been changed but very little from that time to this. Many of the best men of our city have been members of this department, and have thus served their fellow men in times gone by. The passing of the years has changed the personnel of the organization, but the spirit of service, the wish to become efficient and expeditious in battling with one of Nature's most relentless enemies—the fire fiend—continues to actuate the men who today form the local fire department as it actuated those men of the early day bucket brigade or those knights of the dish pan or of the wash tub.

The Howl of the Coyote

The echoes of sounds of the wild which linger longest in the memories of those who peopled the regions of the western prairies when primitive nature was at its best, are the piercing, shrill, night-time calls of the coyote.

The chatter of the prairie dog, the whistle of the scurrying ground squirrel, the honk of the crane, of the wild goose, of the brant and of the duck, as they wended their seasonal flight to the northern feeding grounds or south for breeding comfort; the springtime boom of the prairie chickens and the piping call of the quail, the lovelorn coo of the turtle dove and the trill of the meadow lark; the call of the whippoorwill in the evening twilight, and the hoot of the owl and the squawk of the night hawk; all these varied voices of the wild folk linger with us as minor chords in Nature's symphony.

But the howl of the coyote, stabbing the eardrums like a dagger thrust, and carrying the weird impression of the cry of a child in distress, will linger with us until the end of time.

I wonder if Pard Lamoreux, the druggist, remembers the time when we had the "coyote" in the printing office on Forest Avenue? And Will O'Connel, the grocery man, does he recall that "coyote"? It was like this:

Pard was our job printer and ad man, an able, industrious and quiet worker.

Our "devil"—the boy who took the proofs, swept the office, built the fires, borrowed hair spaces by the

pound and left-handed monkey wrenches from our neighboring printers, ran errands and looked for the "type lice"—was Will O'Connell, then a lad of about 12 or 14, and a real live wire.

You would not suspect that Will, the staid family man, the courteous merchant, was ever anything but decorum personified. But when he was our office devil he was an active proposition—singing at the top of his shrill young voice; laughing loudly on the slightest provocation, and making all kinds of racket in a manner so dear to the hearts of youth.

He got on Pard's nerves. One day Pard came to the boss with a serious protest.

"Can't we do something to stop the racket of that blamed young coyote?" he asked. "His yelling around here, like the devil he is, just gets on my nerves, and I don't know whether I am setting up a hotel bill of fare or a public sale bill."

And from then on to the end of his apprenticeship, Will was known in the office as "The Coyote."

Scalped, But Still Lives

There were many graphic and unusual experiences of the early day settlers of western Kansas worthy of record. Some of them were comical and some pathetic, some gruesome, and others that in prophetic import went far towards laying the foundation for the wonderful patriotic attributes of the people who today make up our magnificent commonwealth.

But perhaps the most tragic and agonizing minutes ever endured by men who helped to conquer the wilds of this locality were those endured by Allen W. Edwards. Mr. Edwards is now a successful farmer living near Enid, Oklahoma, surrounded by his children and grandchildren, and enjoying well earned comforts of life.

The incident here written about is called to mind by a recent interview with Mr. Edwards published in the Wichita Eagle.

In the latter eighties Mr. Edwards came back here to the scene of his youthful travail, and comment upon the incidents of his unusual experiences was at that time made in our local papers.

Mr. Edwards is now a man 78 years old, and until a couple of years ago, he was actively engaged in farming. But the encroachment of old age has at last weakened the once vigorous body which had endured so much, though his intellect is still bright and his manner cheerful and optimistic.

The story of his experience as I recall it is as follows:

In the summer of 1864 he, then a lad of seventeen years, was driving an ox team with a train of freighters hauling from the Missouri River to Santa Fe, New Mexico, over the Santa Fe Trail. That was eight years before the Santa Fe Railroad was built up the Arkansas Valley, and when this county was an unsurveyed part of what was called "The Great American Desert."

On July 18th of that year their wagon train reached a point a few miles west of where the Walnut Creek joins the Arkansas River—the ground, in fact, which Great Bend, a prosperous city of elegant homes and splendid business houses, now occupies—when a band of Kiowa Indians suddenly emerged from the dense timber along the Walnut Creek and attacked the train.

The Indians, all mounted, had a few rifles, but most of them were armed with bows and arrows and tomahawks. With unearthly yells the savages swooped down upon the wagon train, circling about it and keeping up a constant fire of bullets and arrows.

There were 25 freighters, men and boys, and 16 wagons. They had been lulled to a feeling of safety during their progress by reports that the Indians had been kept pretty well under control by the Government troops, and that the Trail was reasonably safe, so there were but a few rifles in the outfit, and the sudden onslaught of the red men left them no time to prepare for defense. Besides, they knew that they were but a little distance from Fort Zarah, where Government troops were stationed, and the attack was totally unexpected. Had they had any warning of the coming attack

they would have circled the wagons, put them tongue to tail board, with the live stock inside the circle, and the wagons would have been breastworks against the enemy. As it was, the wagon train was strung out a half mile or more, and the savages overwhelmed each wagon and its defenders as they came to it.

Of the 25 freighters 10 were killed outright and some others were so severely wounded that they died in a short time. The attack continued for about half an hour, when the soldiers at Fort Zarah, which was located a short distance east of where the present bridge crosses the Walnut, became aware of the trouble and opened artillery fire, while preparing to send troopers to the relief of the attacked. This was the signal for the Indians to retire, and they scampered back into the timber, pursued by a troop of mounted soldiers.

Before decamping they rustled among their victims and hastily secured as many scalps as they could before the soldiers came. Mr. Edwards' own experience is best told in his interview:

"At the time of the attack I had become tired of riding and was walking along side my oxen. I had nothing with which to defend myself except a buffalo skinner's knife, and so I was easy pickings for the half dozen redskins who swarmed about me. I was knocked senseless for the time by the onslaught. When I gained consciousness, as nearly as I can recall, I was lying close to a tree, with arrows sticking in me on both sides, near my abdomen, also an arrow in one of my arms and several bullets in other parts of my body. I was weak

from the loss of blood, and suffering mightily. Sure thought I was going to croak. I have a sort of hazy recollection of watching the red devils scalping the dead and dying.

"Then they came to me; seemed to hesitate, deliberating probably whether they had best skedaddle, or wait and get my scalp. Then one of them stooped down and grabbing my hair cut a piece of scalp off the back of my head. They evidently thought I was dead, and I never moved for fear they would make sure of it.

"By this time the guns of the fort were booming, and so the savages mounted their ponies and rode away. The soldiers soon appeared, and the freighters who had escaped death—myself among them—were taken to the fort and a doctor—Dr. Clarke, I think was his name—treated our wounds. My cousin, Taulbard Edwards, was killed early in the attack. He had several bullet wounds, and a number of arrows were sticking in his body."

Mr. Edwards has never entirely recovered from the scalp wound. The knife of the scalper at one place punctured to the bone, and for all these years since that awful event there have been times when a running sore would gather at that point and give him more or less trouble for a while.

Two Court Incidents

When Bill was a young man, close to the twenties, and sported his tempestuous way among the younger crowd of our town, he was indeed a live wire and a constant problem in exuberance of spirit and enjoyment of innocent fun. And that spirit of seeing mostly the funny side of life is still with him, I believe, although he is now a grey headed builder of bungalows out on the Pacific slope, where the stately palm spreads its umbrella wings to make welcome shade, and the tall eucalyptus shoots boldly upwards to catch the ocean breezes. He and the writer have been close friends, "relatively" speaking, since he landed in Great Bend about 1877, and I am presuming on this friendship to give me immunity from verbal criticism or physical chastisement for making public some of the unwritten incidents of his young life.

Somehow Bill has had the knack of generally securing the good things that came along. He had been told, when only a little shaver, that it was always polite and proper, when pie or cake was passed to him, to take the piece next to him on the plate. One day the pie happened to be cut with one piece much larger than the others, and as it sat in front of him he noticed that the big piece was farthest away. As the meal progressed he would surreptitiously reach over and turn the pie plate around, a little bit at a time, until, when he was ready for pie, that big slice was the nearest one to him, and, of course,

it was only a matter of politeness for him to take that piece.

If the fates don't just naturally send the things he wants his way, why he takes steps to head them his way—that is all.

Bill and I attended the State Fair at Topeka one fall, and took in the sights with all the gusto of the proverbial "country jay." Among other attractions on the Midway was a wheel of fortune operated by a sleek young fellow with a glib tongue. As we stood watching the suckers bite, and deliberating in our minds whether or not to take a flier, an official of the Fair and a couple of policemen pounced upon the wheel of fortune man and chased him off the grounds, and our visions of "easy money" went glimmering.

That evening as we stood on the Santa Fe depot platform waiting for our train, we again saw the wheel of fortune man. He was cussing the town, the Fair management, and everything in general.

Bill went up to him and asked all about it, putting in an oar now and then to keep the stream of virility going. About that time a couple of cops came up, and after admonishing the "sure thing" manager to "shut his trap, and beat it," turned to Bill and said:

"Are you one of 'em, too?" Bill gave them the "ha, ha," and denied the implication. But Mr. Policeman said he guessed he had better take Bill up to the Captain for investigation—and up to the police station we went, for of course I would not desert Bill in time of distress.

To the Captain we told who we were, showed him our return railway tickets and other credentials of innocent Jay-town residents; and the Captain was convinced that we were not in collusion with the ejected wheel of fortune man, but just two "innocents abroad." But right here commenced the sad, sad part of the incident:

Topeka, no longer a frontier town of free and easy habit, had an ordinance making it a felony to carry concealed weapons. When frisking Bill the cop retrieved a little five-shot pistol with real cartridges in it—and the Captain said "\$6.75."

Between us we dug up that much, then waited for the next train west.

While Bill was not the real hero of the next incident, he was in a measure the responsible party.

One night there was a picnic out on the Walnut, at John Harris' grove. Bill accosted one of his chums (we will call him Ed for convenience) and said:

"Let's go down to the dance."

Ed was agreeable, so they went to Benedict's barn and hired a couple of riding ponies and meandered picnicwards. There they found a most hilarious party enjoying all kinds of amusements.

There was a big dance platform, a bowling alley, shooting gallery, doll racks, and of course an improvised bar with beer pullers behind it and beer guzzlers in front of it. General Hilarity had charge of the whole affair.

The shooting gallery was operated by Jake and John Corbin. Two targets were affixed to a couple of trees,

and between them hung one of those torch arrangements with a coal oil tank swinging below. Bill and Ed decided to try their skill.

"Three shots for a dime, and a prize if you score a bull's-eye."

Bill shot first; then Ed tried his hand. His third shot scored a "bull's-eye"—he hit the oil tank fair in the center—and then the conflagration set in.

The Corbin boys wanted Ed to pay the damages—about \$12 they said. Ed denied felonious intent—said he aimed at the target, and the puncturing of the tank was an accident. There was much "chewing of the rag" on both sides and rough talk by the bystanders. Bill caught Ed's attention and told him:

"We had better beat it, this crowd is getting rough."

So the two boys slipped away when they saw a good chance, mounted their horses and headed for town. Soon as they got clear of the grove Bill said:

"Let 'im out, Ed, they may follow us," and took the lead on the dead run.

Ed was not much of a horseman, this being probably the second time he had straddled a horse. So he let go of the bridle reins and clung to the saddle horn, and into town they came. When they reached the stable Bill had to help Ed dismount, and then assist him down the street.

Ed was not greatly elated over the success of the trip. Twelve dollars damages and he earning only four dollars

a week and his board as a clerk. And the Corbins said they would take it into court.

The next morning he got the summons to appear all right. When the case was called before Squire Buckland, and when Bill had described the circumstances, the case was thrown out of court. Ed had offered to pay the boys five dollars, the only money he had, but they insisted on going to law.

The attorney, the court, and the prosecuting witnesses are gone; but Bill and Ed, two staid Grandpas, still remain to—we hope—laugh over their early day predicament.

A Veteran's Story

The veterans of the Civil War of the sixties are year by year, month by month, and day by day, receiving their last discharge, and beneath the folds of that glorious flag for which they offered their best energies, their careworn bodies are being laid away to rest. In Kansas soil is the resting place of many hundreds of the "old boys" who have fought the last fight.

After the war many of the Kansas men returned to the state to take up the intricate threads of active civil life which had been cast aside for the more important business of preserving the Union. Many soldiers from other states also came out to these western prairies to begin again their homebuilding; and Kansas is known the country over as the great Soldier State.

Among the few Civil war veterans who are still with us is Jacob B. Miller, the retired photographer. Jake is of a retiring, unostentatious disposition, and not given to boasting of his personal actions, but he permits me to record several of his early day experiences.

He came to Great Bend in the spring of 1872. He was the first star route mail carrier out of this city, carrying the mail from here to the farthest postoffice west, then named Ness Center. But later Ness County was organized and Ness City named as the county seat. Rush County was organized, and Rush Center was the county seat. Jake says there was not much mail to carry,

but there was plenty of excitement to keep him from going to sleep on the job.

He had to keep one eye open to escape being run over by stampeding buffalo herds which were then numerous, and to avoid a possible holdup by outlaws who found the Walnut Valley a good place to hide out; also the scorching hot winds of summer and biting blizzards of winter were not the most pleasant things to face.

Jake will jokingly tell you, with a straight face, but a twinkle in that left eye, that when he arrived in Great Bend in 1872 the whole north side of what is now the public square was filled with dugouts, which were the homes of hundreds of inhabitants. And he'll swear "It's the God's truth," even against the fact that the town was not laid out until the summer of 1872.

It was a prairie dog town, and as the two-legged citizens began to come in with their rattle of hammer and saw, the original inhabitants of the dugouts moved on east, and some of their descendants may still be found in their dugouts east of town.

Jake was always a man of peace, and never a drinking man. He eventually opened a photograph gallery, and in the cowboy days he used to carry with him a great big bandana handkerchief, knotted behind his neck, and hanging down in front. When urged too strenuously to take a drink with some insistent cowboy, he would put the bottle, or glass, to his lips, then let the liquor gurgle down—into his big bandana. Then he would slip away and wring it out and dry it.

He was a little dubious about the telling of this for fear some man whose bootlegger has gone back on him might take a notion to visit his (Jake's) rooms to try and find one of those bandanas which might not have been squeezed out dry.

One incident of horse trading he recalls:

A man came riding up the street on a tough looking but apparently sound and serviceable mule. A big German settler accosted him with:

"How you trade mit me for horse?"

The other looked about for the horse, and asked: "What kind of a horse? Where is it?"

"Oh, he goot horse—he no look so goot, but he goot horse."

The German brought around his horse leading him again, saying: "He not look goot, but you c'n ride him. How you trade?"

The man sized up the animal, which was a fair sized horse, apparently not old, and said, as a venture: "Give you five dollars to boot."

"All right, I trade," said the German, "he no look so goot, but he fine horse."

The man forked over the five, skinned the saddle off the mule and put it on the horse, mounted and started off. After a few steps the horse stumbled over a bump in the ground and fell. The rider got up, jerked the horse to his feet and again looked him over. This time he got square in front of the animal, and immediately discovered the trouble.

"Why, you blamed Dutchman, this horse is blind," he exclaimed.

"Well, dat's all right; I did tell you two, tree times, he no 'look goot.' Vat you t'ink, he no 'look' goot?"

"Ain't it the truth," said the man, and he led his blind horse away, knowing he had been bested by the other man.

Jake says, in all his years of over three score and ten he never saw but one real fight. While he was in the Union army it was his luck—or misfortune—never to have been in a battle. He was within a two days' march of Richmond, when Lee evidently heard that Jake was coming, and surrendered; and that ended that. Then, after peace was declared, he came to Kansas. Was here for several years during the tempestuous cowboy times, mixing on the streets a great deal. Then, in pursuit of his calling as a photographer, he followed the cowmen west and spent several years in Dodge City. He saw many a victim of street fights laid away on the famous Boot Hill, but never was an eye witness of a real fight until he came back to Great Bend when the town became more civilized, when there were not more than a half dozen saloons here, and when dance halls were things of the past.

One day he dropped into a saloon to watch the boys play pool. Jimmie Moran, who many will remember, was at one of the tables. Jimmie was a short, squat man, about five feet two, and an Irishman, with all the trimmings.

Jake heard a racket at the front door; it was slammed open, and a Mr. Mecklem rushed in, saying:

"There he is—I'll git him."

Mecklem was a large man, probably six feet tall. When Jimmie saw him he took his billiard cue in both hands, and sprang to meet his opponent. The next thing Jake saw was the billiard cue flying out through a plate glass window, and Moran and Mecklem locked together on the floor. Finally Mecklem got Moran by the chin whiskers, and was bumping his head on the floor.

"Now, will ye say ye've got enough," said Mecklem.

And Jimmie said "Yis."

"And that," said Jake, "is the only fight I ever witnessed. It was some old fuss the men had, and it was settled right there."

Static of Long Ago

Users of the radio of the present day who are inclined to become provoked at the uninvited interruptions which modern science has called static and which so often is "butting in" on your enjoyment of a musical number or an oratorical gem being broadcast from Kalamazoo or Kokomo, Schenectady or old St. Lou, or some other more or less important locality, should cease to worry.

Once, long ago, when lightning struck Farmer John's barn and burned it down, killed the brindle cow and defeathered the old dominick rooster, his five year old son, Jimmie, said to his mother, who was weeping and wailing over the disaster:

"Never mind, Mammy; Father, he'll fix that ole lightnin' so it won't cut no more monkeydoodles like that."

Never you mind, you radio fans, Daddy Science will soon throw old static off the circuit. Just now we do not understand all we know about the thing and its monkey-shines. But with the assistance of Father Time the vast unmeasured field of mysterious blue we call the atmosphere will be surveyed and sounded, explored and exploited, and grouchy old static will be placed on a reservation by himself, or else he will be harnessed and trained to perform duty as an obedient servant of mankind, as our daddies have harnessed and trained the

lightning to help in doing creative instead of destructive work.

There always has been some kind of static to interfere with our plans and conflict with our wishes.

Obstreperous Kid Static, for instance, or Juvenile Static.

It was composed of boys and girls from the ages of five to twelve years. Annoying but not intentionally harmful. Present at most public gatherings, especially those out of doors where free air was more plentiful and certainly purer than that to be found at and about the many thousands of gasoline filling stations along our highways and on about every other street corner.

At such meetings the kid static would play around the outer edges of the gathering, and with their ceaseless racket make it impossible for a greater part of the audience to enjoy the loud speaker or amplifier for the occasion. We could not understand why those children were permitted to act up like that. They ought to have been left at home to study their lessons or go to bed. But in later years we discovered that those same youngsters had developed some sort of usefulness, through a proper mixture of control and persuasion and the innate spirit of true Americanism, into worth-while men and women.

Some of this kind of static can occasionally be heard even at this day. Notice it at the open air church services and at the weekly open air band concerts. It has not been as obnoxious as it was in the olden times, doubtless because most of the more obstreperous kids—those of

the "stripling" age—the age of "calf love," as Grandma would say—are out in Dad's car these days indulging in petting parties.

The Grown-up Rowdy was another kind of static to register interference. Such interrupters of esthetic and intellectual feasts guffawed or buzzed out at critical moments during lectures, concerts or political meetings to the discomfort of everybody else. It often developed that the Grown-up static could be, and was, used and controlled—with boodle or booze—by one political party to confuse and muddle the speakers of other political parties.

Even those people who devoted a large part of their time to religious instruction, observation or practice were annoyed by static. All good "fans" tuned in on the heavenly circuit and decorously awaited the opening ceremonies of the services. The text would be announced and the good minister would move along smoothly through his firstly and secondly, and approach the pith, or core of his argument. Then from the "Amen" corner would be heard a solemn but very audible "A-men." "Bless the Lord." "Praise His name." And that would be kept up at regular intervals and occasional variation of words during the rest of the services. Although none questioned the sincerity of those (shall we say "Butinskys"?) their efforts were but static to many and spoiled the savor of the sermons. It was endured, however, and by some endorsed as good, old-fashioned religion bubbling up and boiling over; and in these later days it has to some extent been cured.

No static disturbance is a fixed menace or nuisance, like taxes or death, but appears at different hours. It also is governed somewhat by the state of the weather.

There was another kind of old-fashioned static, viz: Perambulating static; a static both male and female. Transient peddlers and street hawkers, breaking into different lines of merchandising with a racket that set the established storekeepers on edge, their heads to wagging and nodding and their tongues to clattering. Newspapers were involved; these transients were non-taxpayers, non-advertisers, and so far as concerned the territory they invaded, non-homebuilders. They marred the melody of regular business and caused those who enjoyed a smooth sounding and pocket filling commercial trend to devise and put into execution drastic measures for their abolishment.

Another kind of static, the Goods Box Orator, developed generally throughout all political zones, more especially during the closing years of the nineteenth century. These people would not confine themselves, their music or oratory to the notes or rules carefully created, laid down and sent broadcast at great expense by the G.O.P. or the G.U.W. ("Grand Old Party" or "Great Un-Washed"), but they insisted on rasping out discords from preempted street corners and the high-ways and byways, where they crammed their theories and theorems, hypotheses and hyperboles into the ears of the voters, and caused a political mixup which rattled the bones of precedent and rewrote the songs of the land and the texts for spellbinders.

That was static, then unwelcome and uncharted, political static, at that time called P.O.P., or Populism.

Then political scientists were forced by some popular opinion to discover some waves of good in all the disturbing rackets of Goods Box Orators. Those scientists tuned their instruments of assimilation and gathered in the best notes in the songs of the Pops, to be eventually harmonized with their various State and National platforms.

And what was once only static is now considered (and justly so) harmonious and all hunkadory by the two leading political organizations of the land.

Radio patrons should therefore cease to worry. All is not rotten in static Denmark. Daddy Science will some day find a way to sift out the good and shunt the bad into the dump heap. That clatter and rattling, squawking and squalling ding-dong disturbance which sets up in your radio when you turn the dufinkus this way and that and try to tune in on a sermon, a boxing match or a ball game, may one day be discovered to be one more aid to the health and happiness of mankind.

A Few Secrets Divulged

I wonder if I would be giving away any secrets I should not, if I told about some of the secret work of the fraternal orders of the early days? I am going to chance it, anyhow, but I will assure the brothers that the few stunts herein described are now obsolete—are not a part of the lodge work of any secret organization now here.

For instance: All the old settlers, and many of our good people of middle age, will remember what a hearty, happy-go-lucky lad was Charlie Zutavern. He was industrious, ambitious, honest and trustworthy, was whole souled in anything he undertook, and everybody was his friend. His sterling qualities enabled him to advance steadily until at the time of his departure to a better world he had attained a position of profit and trust down in Texas, the land of his adoption when he left Great Bend.

At one time he desired to be taken into a certain popular lodge. The membership was exceedingly well pleased to have his application. When it came time to initiate him he said:

“Now, boys, I want you to give me the whole cheese. Give me anything you’ve got—I’m game for it all.”

And so we gave it to him. Knowing his great appreciation of anything out of the ordinary, we proceeded to rig up a degree not printed in the ritual. The lodge met in the hall over the Brinkman bank, now the M.W.A.

Hall. We gave him the regular work, which was beautiful and instructive, then we put on the extra degree.

We got a big milk tank, about four by four by eight feet, from Will Merritt's creamery. It was set in the middle of the hall and filled with water. A pulley, with a rope, was fastened to the ceiling, one end of the rope attached to a belt around the candidate's middle, while a half dozen husky young men held the other end. At this time some hokus-pokus words were chanted, and the "Grand Hister" announced:

"From the heavens high comes the cooling rain,
All that goes up comes down again."

And he was hoisted to the ceiling, then dropped with a splash into the tank below. Charlie came out smiling, as usual, saying:

"That's all right, boys; this is the month I generally take my bath."

Another incident that the participants will not forget:

A bunch of some forty or fifty members of a Great Bend lodge were going to Hutchinson for some big lodge doings. We made one passenger car load and enjoyed the trip to the limit. On the way down some of the boys thought up a new stunt. Three or four of them would grab some victim, turn him over a car seat, and with a good sized gum shoe and a strong right arm, proceed to paddle his pants on the place that the chair wears out first. The writer knows all about it for he got

the "degree." I'll let the other boys tell who did the paddling.

In one end of the car sat a man of dignified mien and of well known standing in our community. He eyed the operations of the impromptu degree team with a frown of apparent displeasure at such (as he deemed it) boorish conduct. Someone suggested that "Joe" be given the degree. The paddle wielders approached his seat, when he arose and faced them with blood in his eyes and one hand on his hip pocket.

Did he get the degree? Well, when they turned him over the seat, they removed a vicious looking "gat" from his hip pocket, so as to prevent him from hurting himself. Not long after that the man who had too much dignity to "do as the Romans do, when in Rome," sold out his business in Great Bend and removed to other parts.

I will not mention the "Mogullions" in this connection, for they might be "waiting for me."

